

Strait of Hormuz Disruptions

Soaring fuel prices and the burden of inflation

29 October 2026

Introduction

Energy shocks go beyond crude oil.

As disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz persist and alternative supplies are strained, oil prices remain high.

But rising oil prices, constrained refining capacity and barriers to trade quickly translate into higher prices for the fuels that power trade, production and consumption across the globe: diesel, gasoline, jet fuel and marine fuel.

People are already paying more at the pump. And when fuel prices surge, the cost of living often follows.

The consequences are being felt worldwide, but most acutely by vulnerable households in the developing world.

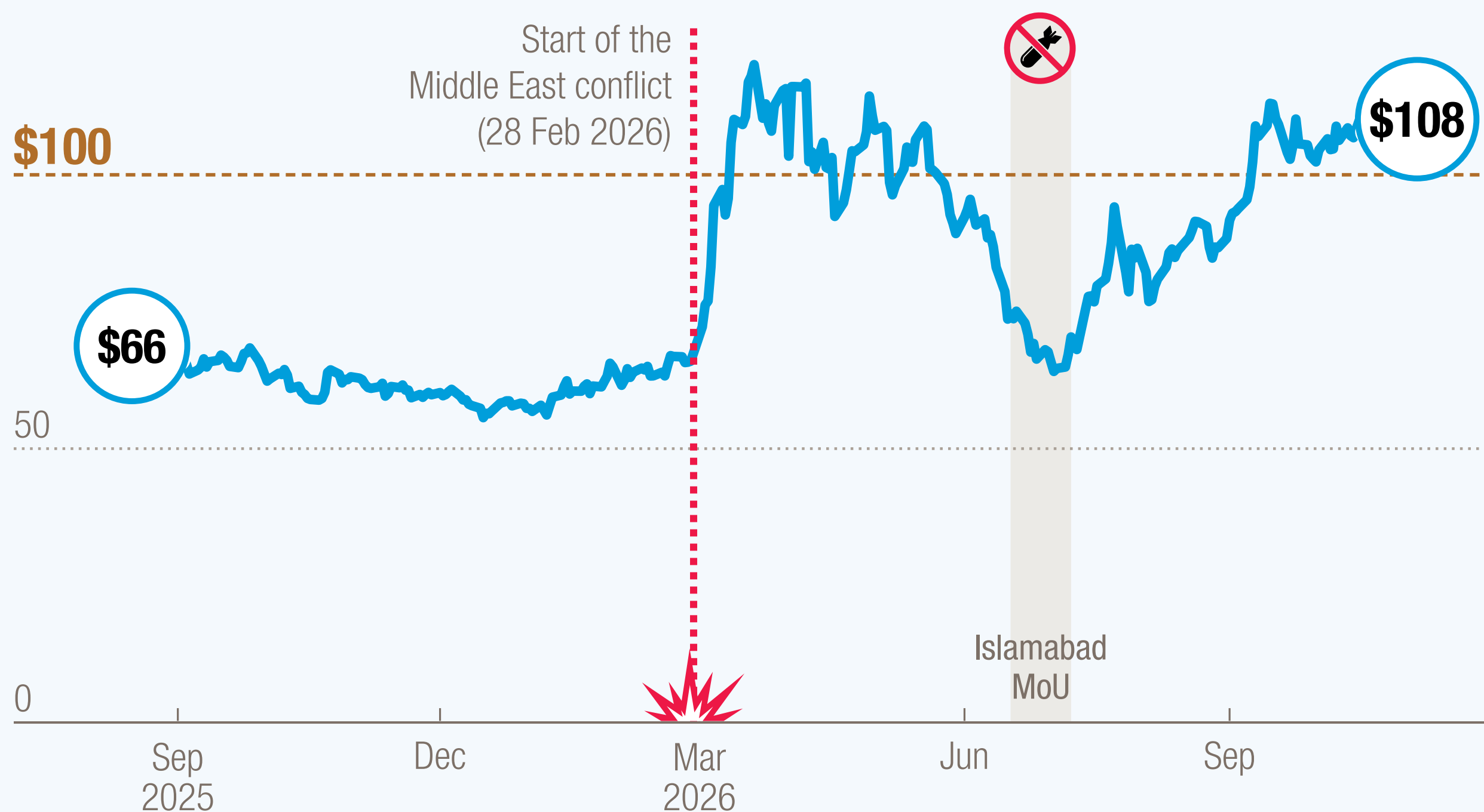




Oil prices remain high, despite recently recovering Middle East exports.



Daily average price of crude oil in dollars per barrel



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on LSEG Datastream.

Note: Prices between 1 September 2025 and 19 October 2026. Average based on Brent (Europe), WTI (Northern America), Dubai (Middle East), Urals (Russian Federation). All four regional prices surpassed \$100 again on 10 September 2026.



And shipping crude oil and fuels has become extremely costly.

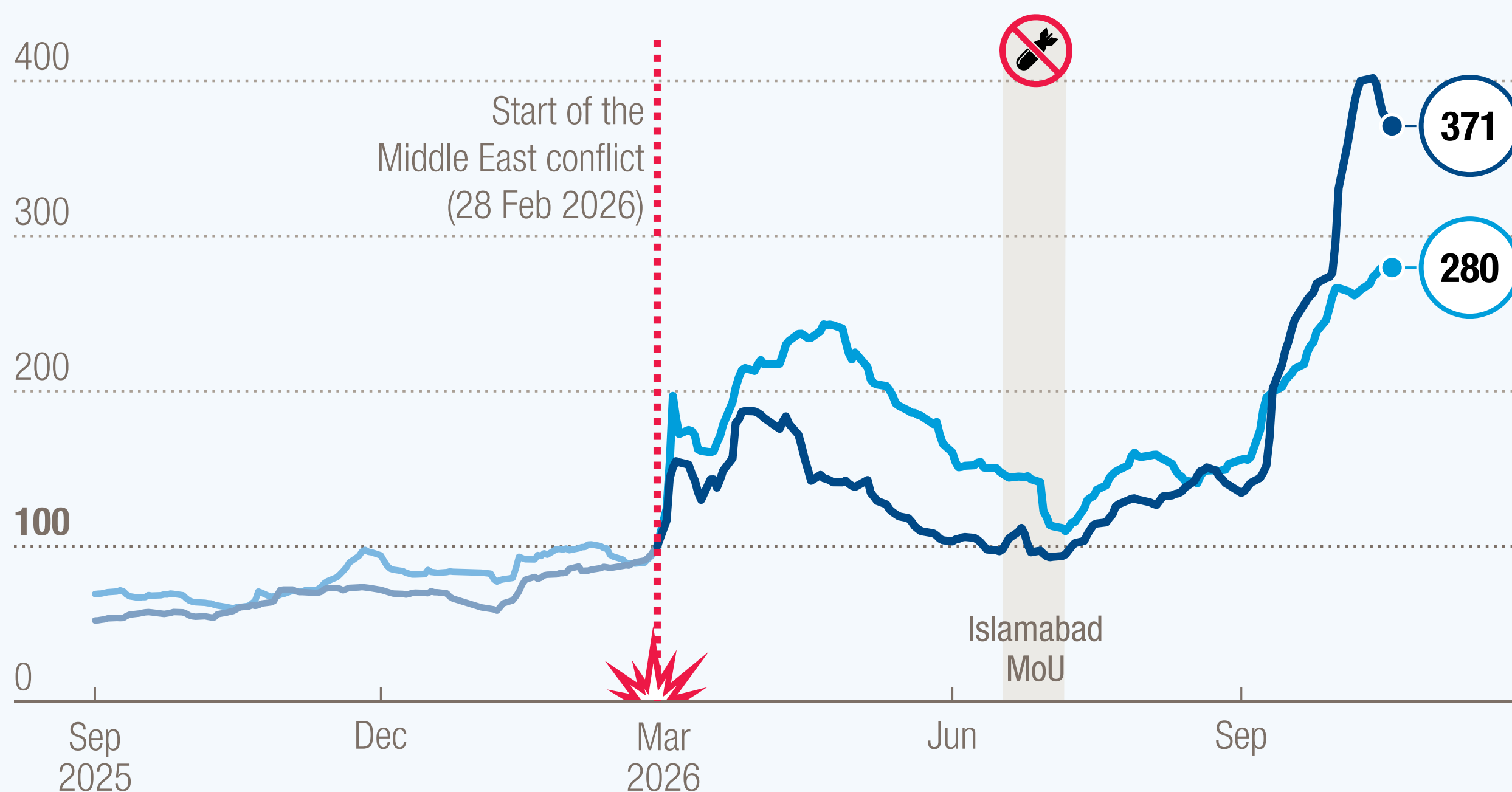
Daily Baltic Exchange Dirty and Clean Tanker Indices,
27 February 2026 = 100



Dirty tankers, mainly crude oil



Clean tankers, mainly refined products



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Baltic Exchange.

Note: Data between 1 September 2025 and 19 October 2026. The indices show the cost of shipping oil across major shipping routes. Reduced availability of tankers, time-consuming ship-to-ship transfers in the Middle East and longer routes contribute to the surge.

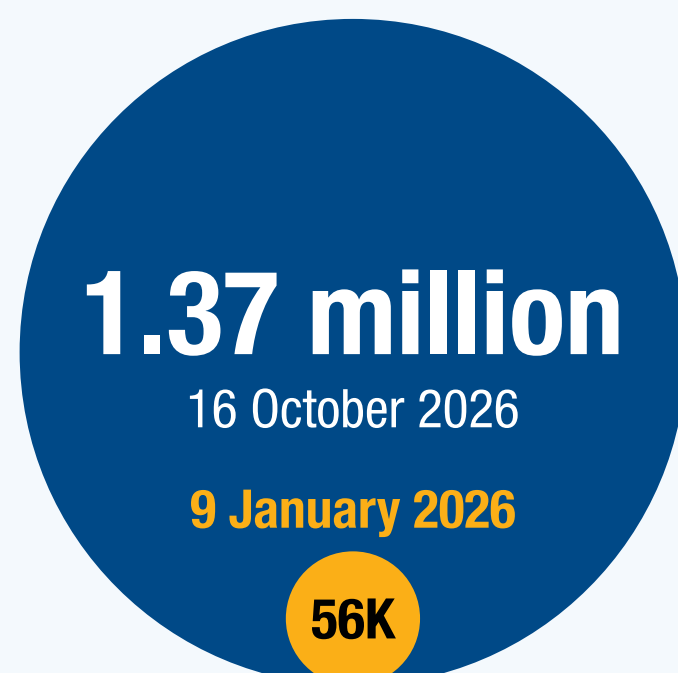


The cost of moving oil has skyrocketed, even outside the Middle East.

Daily tanker earnings, in dollars per day



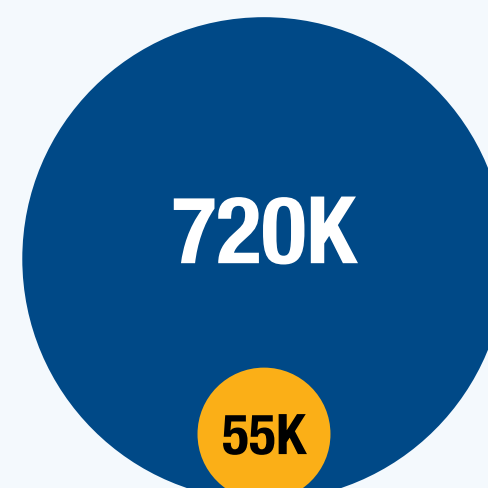
Dirty tankers, mainly crude oil



Middle East
→ China

×25

Outside the Middle East



West Africa
→ China

×13



US Gulf Coast
→ China

×9

Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Baltic Exchange weekly market roundups.

Note: Data retrieved from reports released on 9 January 2026 and 16 October 2026 for very large crude carriers (VLCC) in the 260,000-270,000 deadweight-tonnage range.

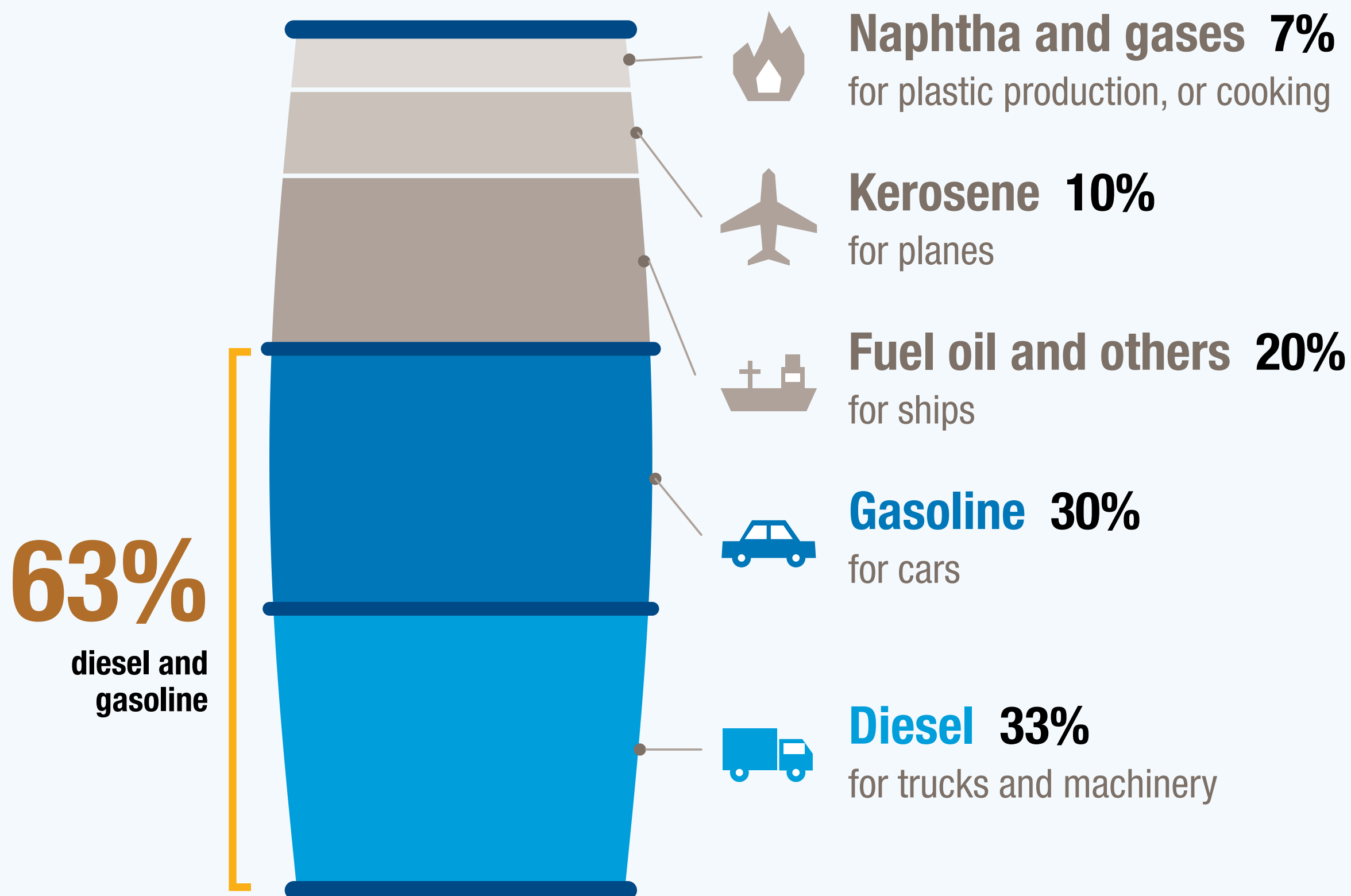


**Oil and fuel market
disruptions quickly
translate into
higher fuel prices**



Roughly two thirds of every barrel of crude oil become diesel or gasoline.

Refinery output prior to the conflict in the Middle East for OECD regions



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on International Energy Agency (IEA), Monthly OECD oil statistics.

Note: Average for the years 2024-2025. Gasoline includes motor gasoline, jet gasoline and aviation gasoline. The share by product depends on demand as well as the type of crude oil (light, medium, heavy), and refinery technology. Uses shown are illustrative.

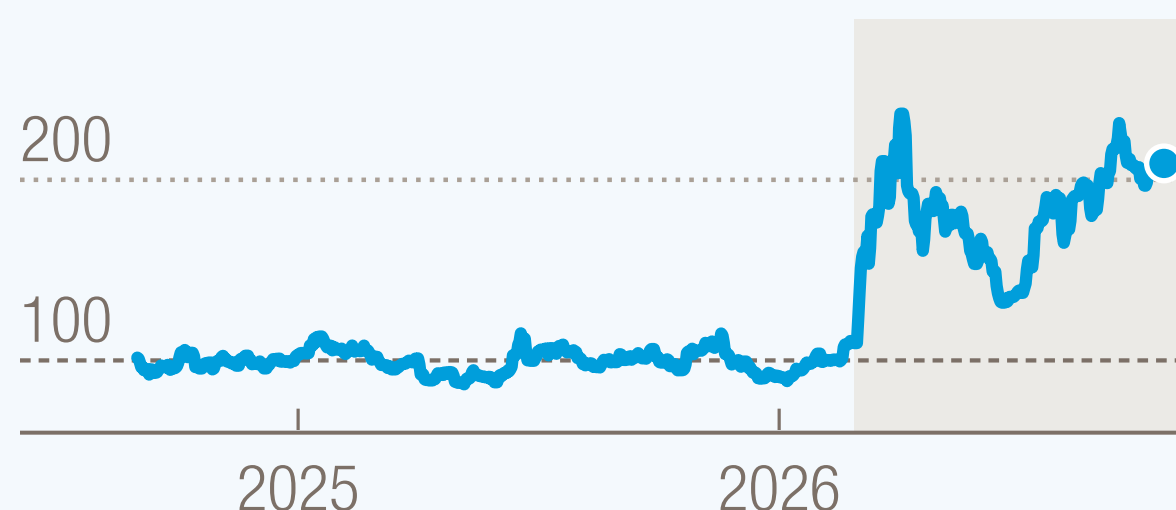


Fuels propelling global production and trade have gotten more expensive.

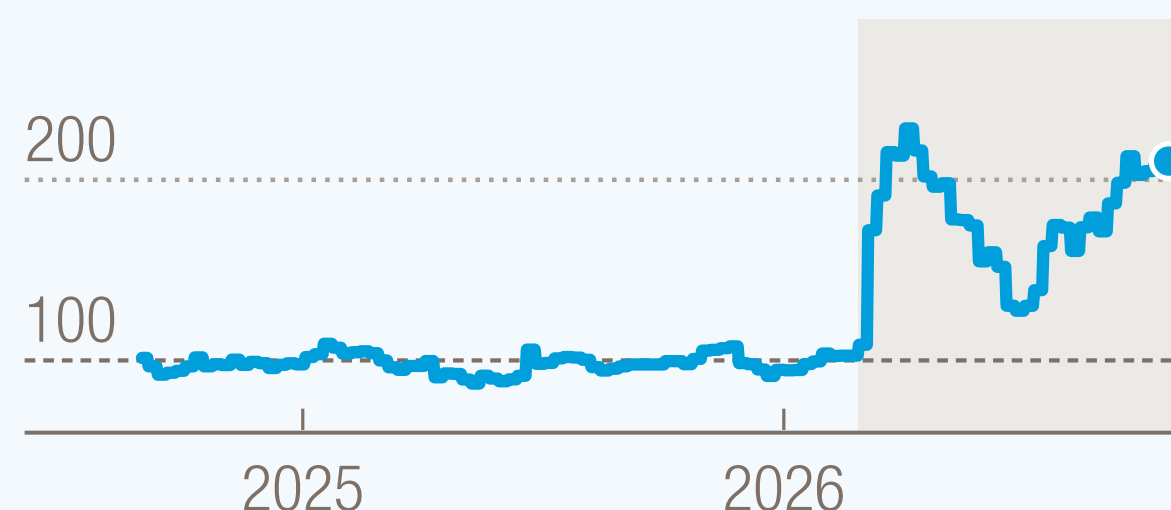
Index: average for the period 1 Sep 2025 - 27 Feb 2026 = 100

■ Since the start of the Middle East conflict (28 Feb 2026)

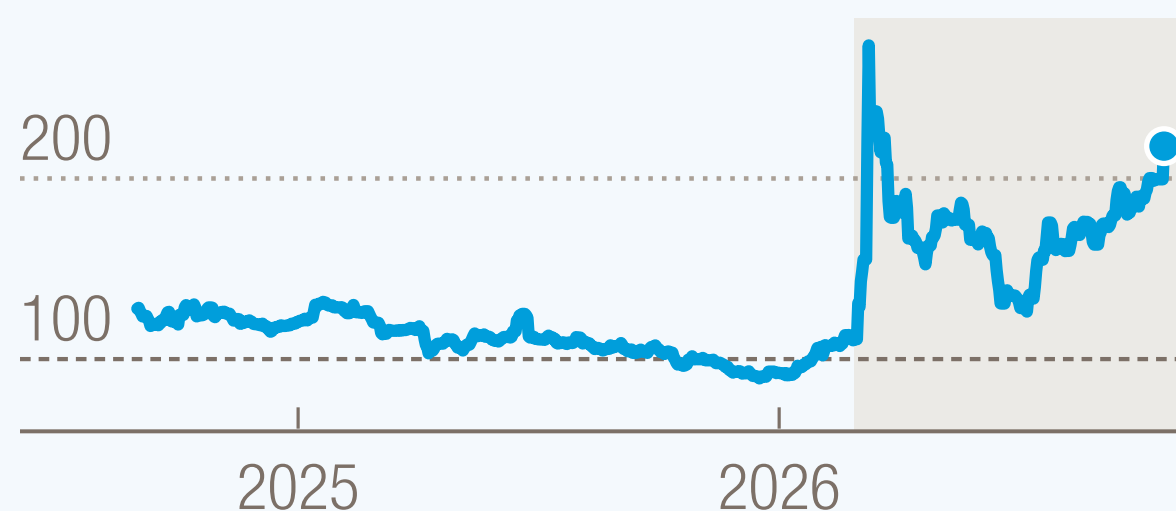
 **Diesel** **+81%**



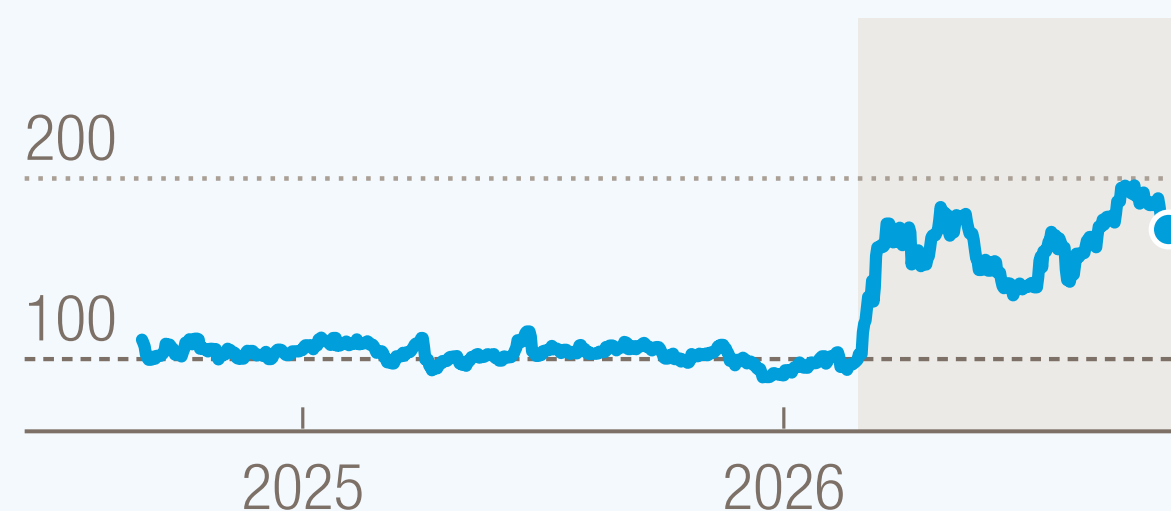
 **Jet fuel** **+80%**



 **Shipping fuel** **+72%**



 **Gasoline** **+64%**



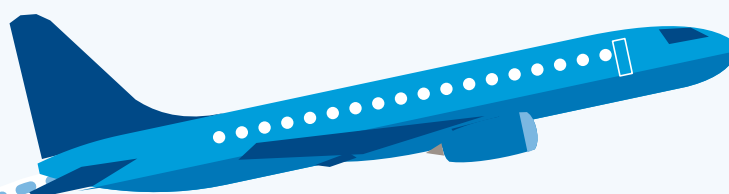
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Clarksons Research Shipping Intelligence Network, LSEG Datastream and International Air Transport Association (IATA) using data from S&P Global Energy.

Note: Increase of prices since the start of the Middle East conflict until 20 October 2026 compared to the six months before (1 September 2025 – 27 February 2026). Shipping fuel is an average of low- and high-sulphur bunker fuel prices in Singapore; diesel includes ultra-low sulphur diesel (10ppm) for Northern America and Europe and gas oil (50ppm) for Asia; gasoline is regular unleaded gasoline.

Jet fuel prices took off globally

Increase of average jet fuel prices since the conflict

+80% globally



JET FUEL

REGIONAL PRICE INCREASE

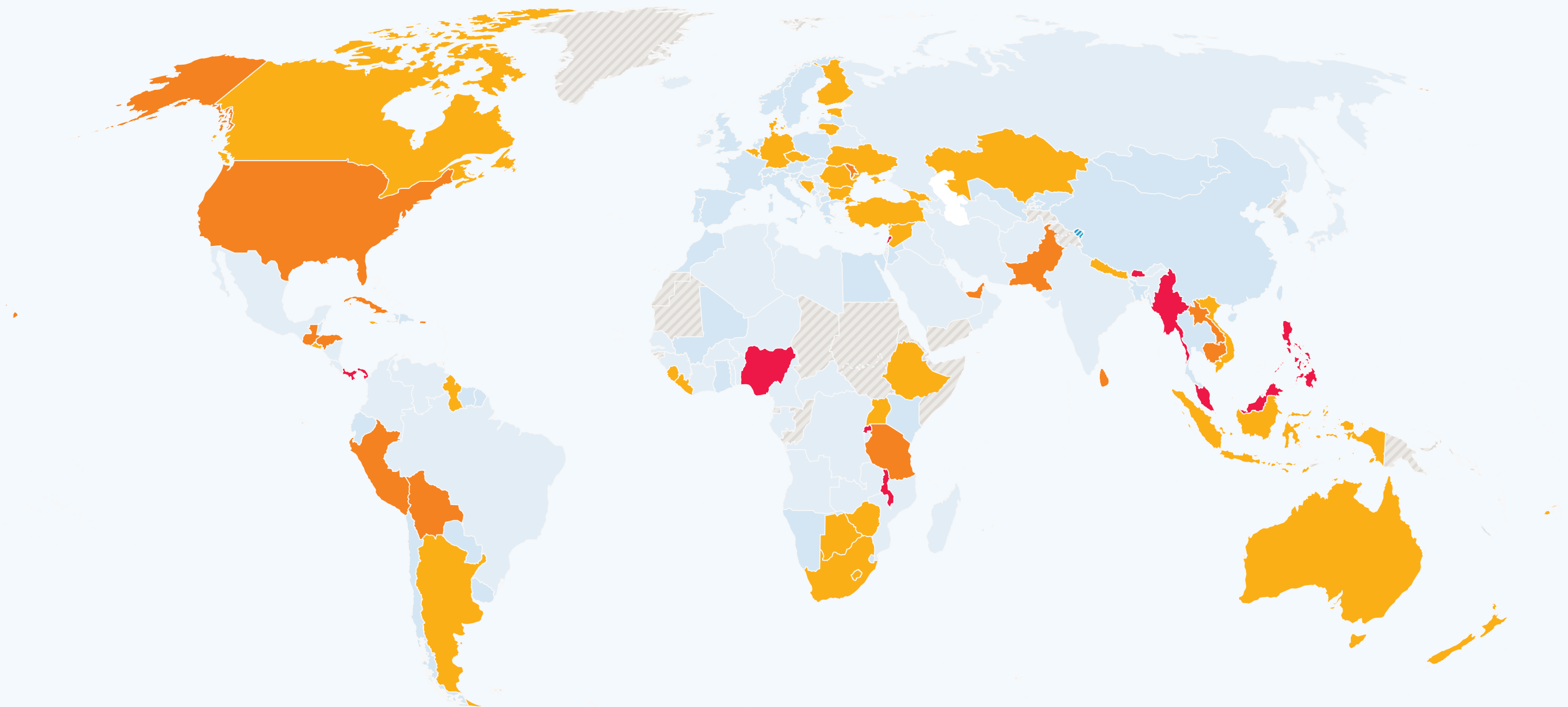
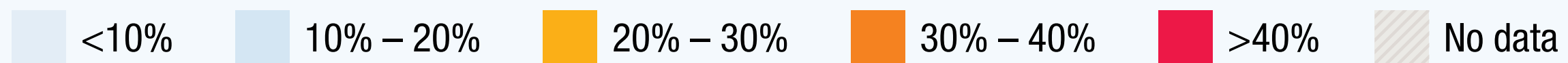
Africa	+89%
Middle East	+85%
Asia and Oceania	+84%
Europe and CIS	+83%
Latin America and the Caribbean	+80%
Northern America	+75%

Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on International Air Transport Association (IATA) using data from S&P Global Energy.

Note: Increase of prices since the start of the Middle East conflict until 16 October 2026 compared to the six months before (1 September 2025 – 27 February 2026). Regional aggregates following IATA classification. CIS stands for the Commonwealth of Independent States.

For 60 countries, local gasoline prices increased by more than 20%.

Change in local retail prices of gasoline, in per cent



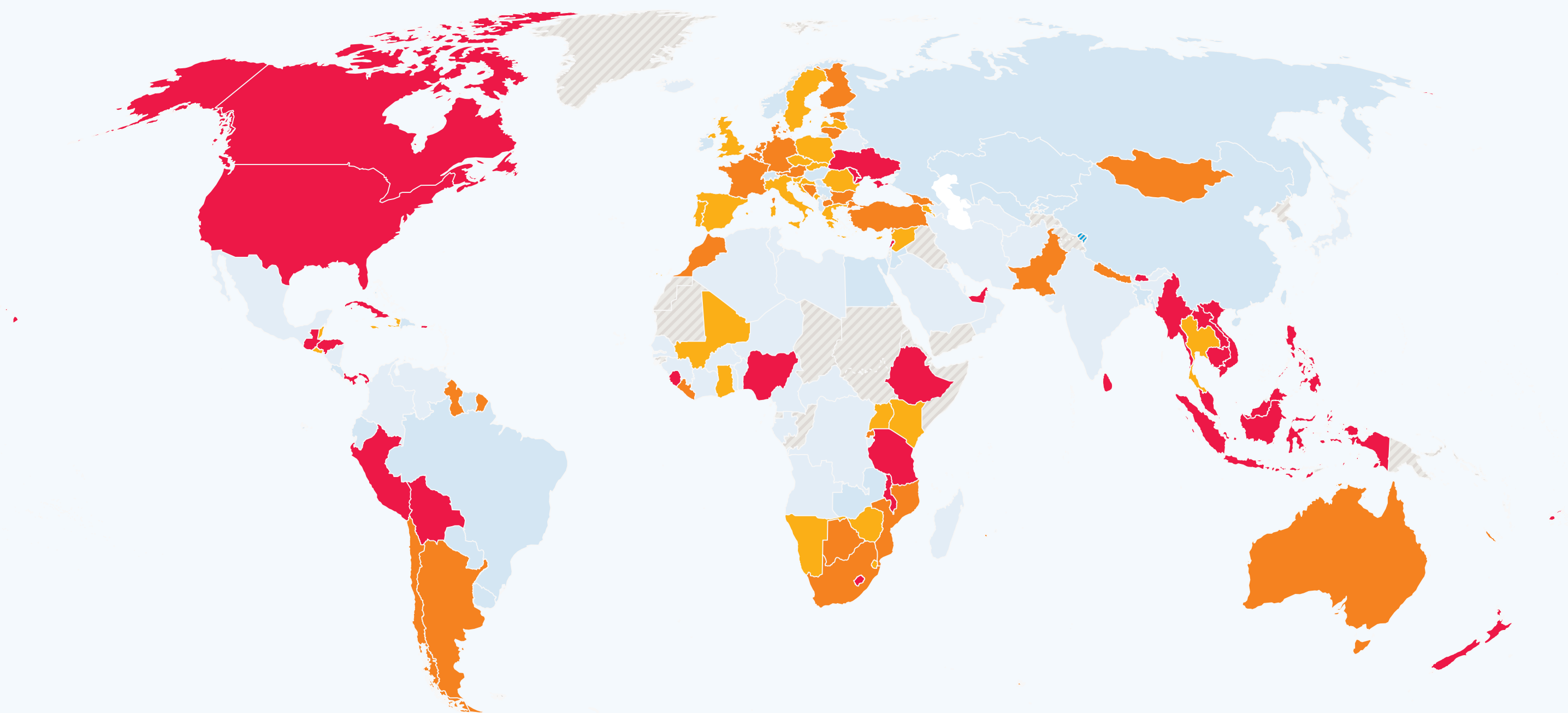
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Global Petrol Prices and national sources.

Note: Change of average local prices at the pump since the start of the Middle East conflict until 19 October 2026, compared to the six months before the conflict (weekly, 1 September 2025 – 23 February 2026). Computations for 161 economies, based on prices in local currencies. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Please see: unctad.org/map-disclaimer

For 95 countries, local diesel prices increased by more than 20%.

Change in local retail prices of diesel, in per cent

 <10%  10% – 20%  20% – 30%  30% – 40%  >40%  No data

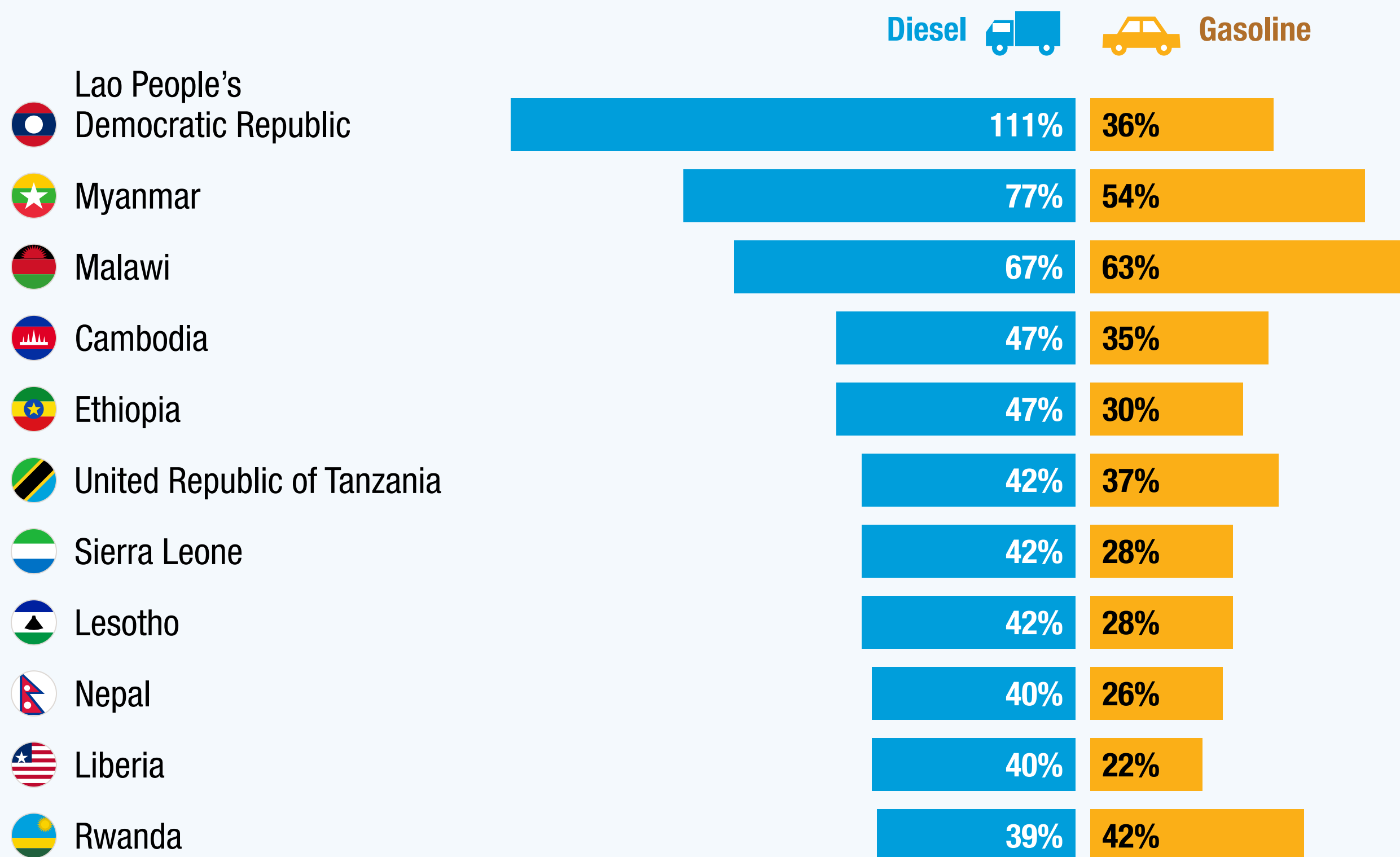


Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Global Petrol Prices and national sources.

Note: Change of average local prices at the pump since the start of the Middle East conflict until 19 October 2026, compared to the six months before the conflict (weekly, 1 September 2025 – 23 February 2026). Computations for 160 economies, based on prices in local currencies. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Please see: unctad.org/map-disclaimer

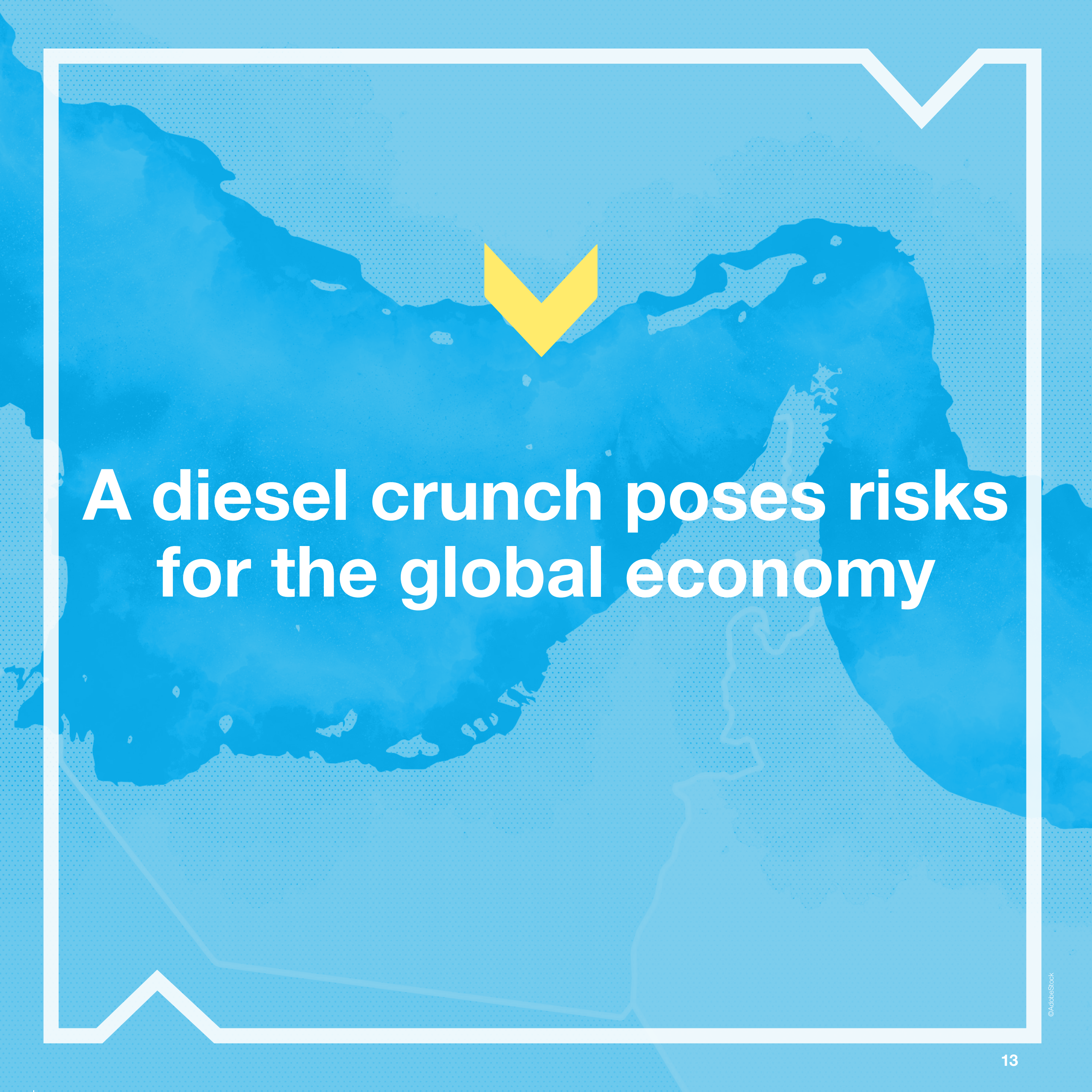
Some of the highest fuel price increases hit vulnerable economies.

Increase of local retail prices of diesel and gasoline for least developed countries, in per cent



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Global Petrol Prices and national sources.

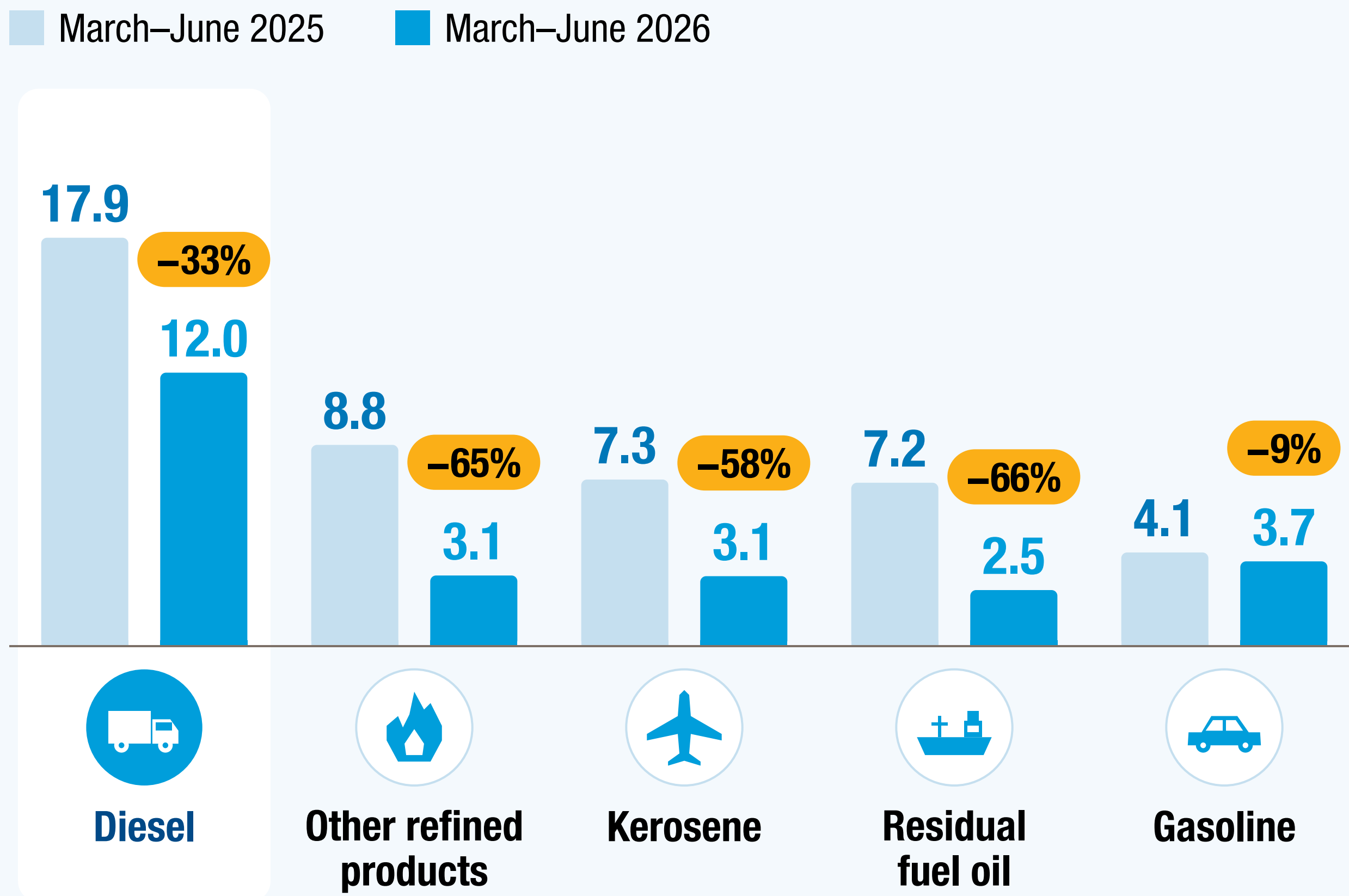
Note: Selection of least developed countries with the highest average increase of local diesel and gasoline prices at the pump in local currencies. Change since the start of the Middle East conflict until 19 October 2026, compared to the six months before the conflict (weekly, 1 September 2025 – 23 February 2026).



A diesel crunch poses risks for the global economy

Diesel is the main fuel exported from the Middle East, but supply dropped.

Exports of Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in million metric tonnes



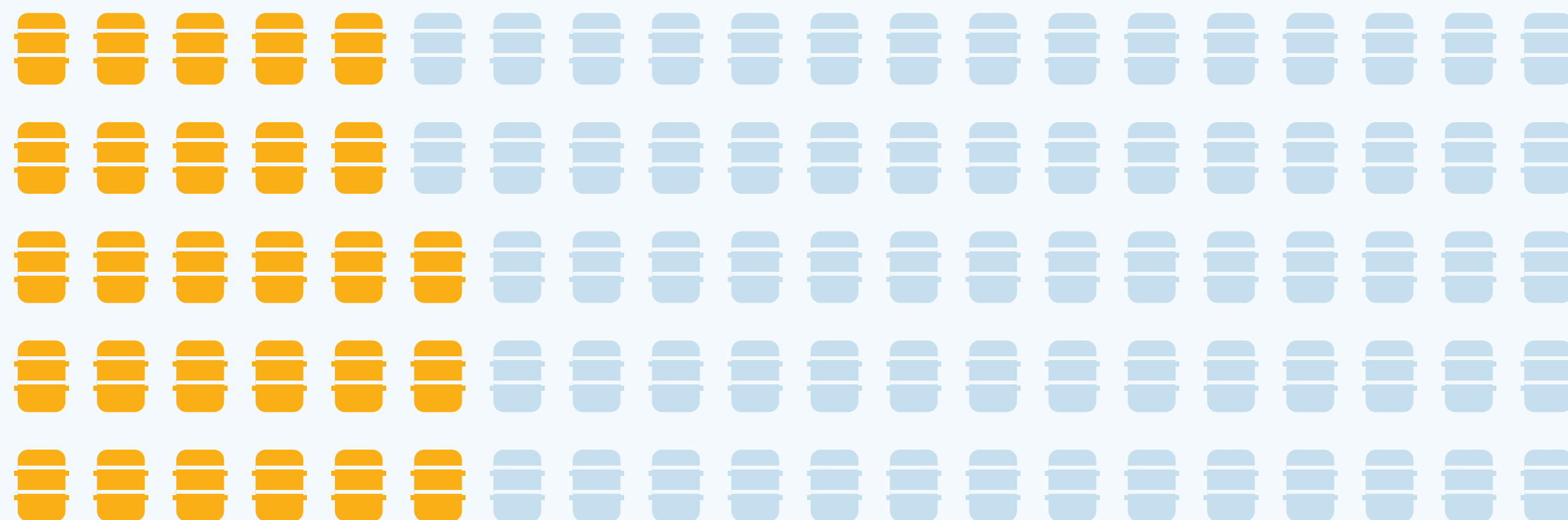
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI).

Note: Gasoline includes motor and aviation gasoline. Kerosene includes jet fuel kerosene. Other refined oil products include, among others, liquefied petroleum gases and naphtha.

Over a quarter of global diesel exports face new barriers.

Share of global exports of diesel facing additional export restricting measures since March 2026

Up to **28%** of global diesel exports are targeted by additional measures to reduce exports



Targeted by measures to reduce exports

2.3 million barrels a day

No measures recorded

5.9 million barrels a day

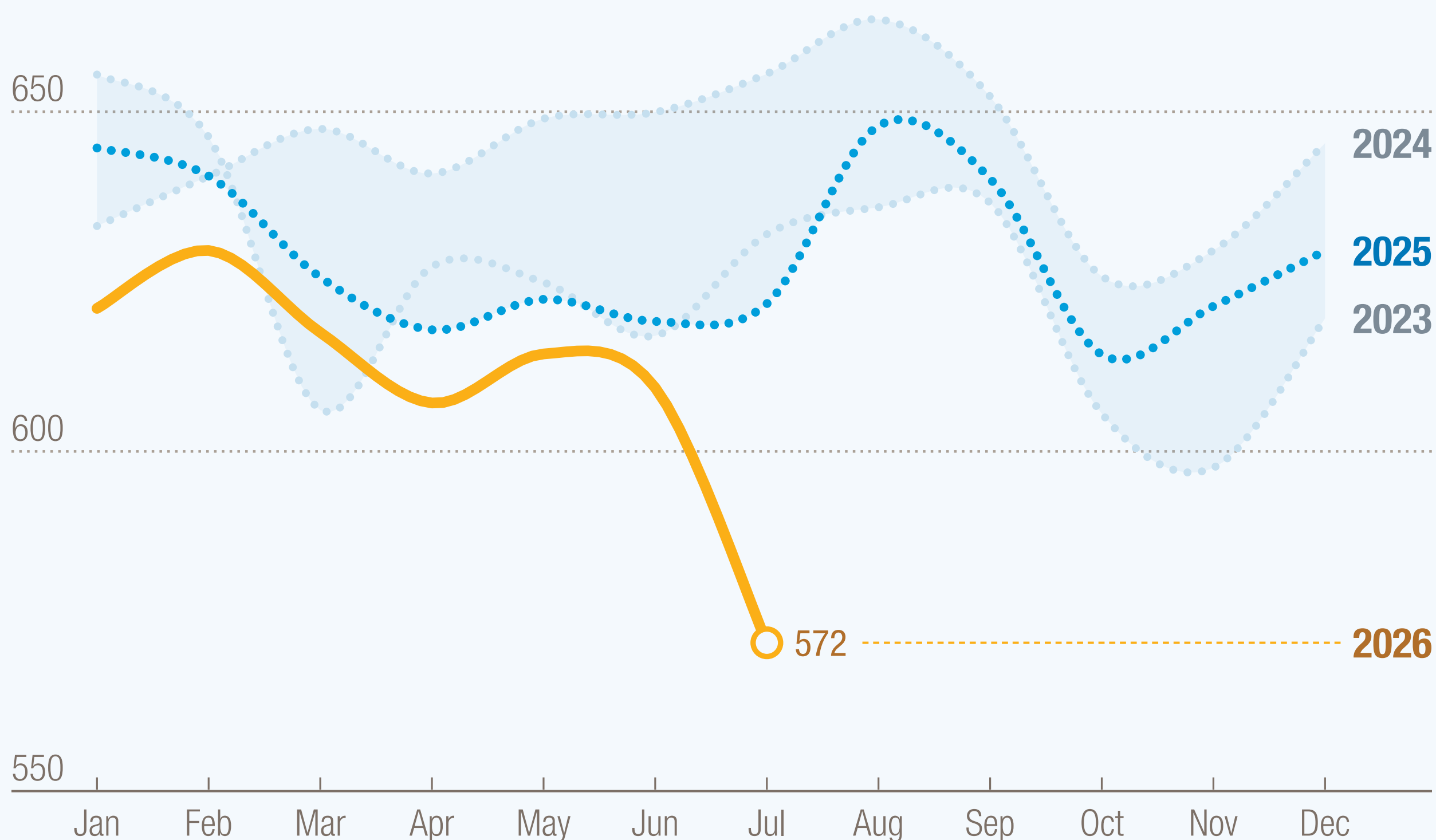
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI), OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2026, ITC Market Access Map and Global Trade Alert.

Note: Global exports of diesel in million barrels per day correspond to the year 2025, the latest available annual data. Measures considered include export bans, quotas, export approvals, and increased export duties, including temporary measures.



Normal mid-year replenishing of diesel stocks did not happen.

Monthly stocks of diesel, in million barrels



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI).

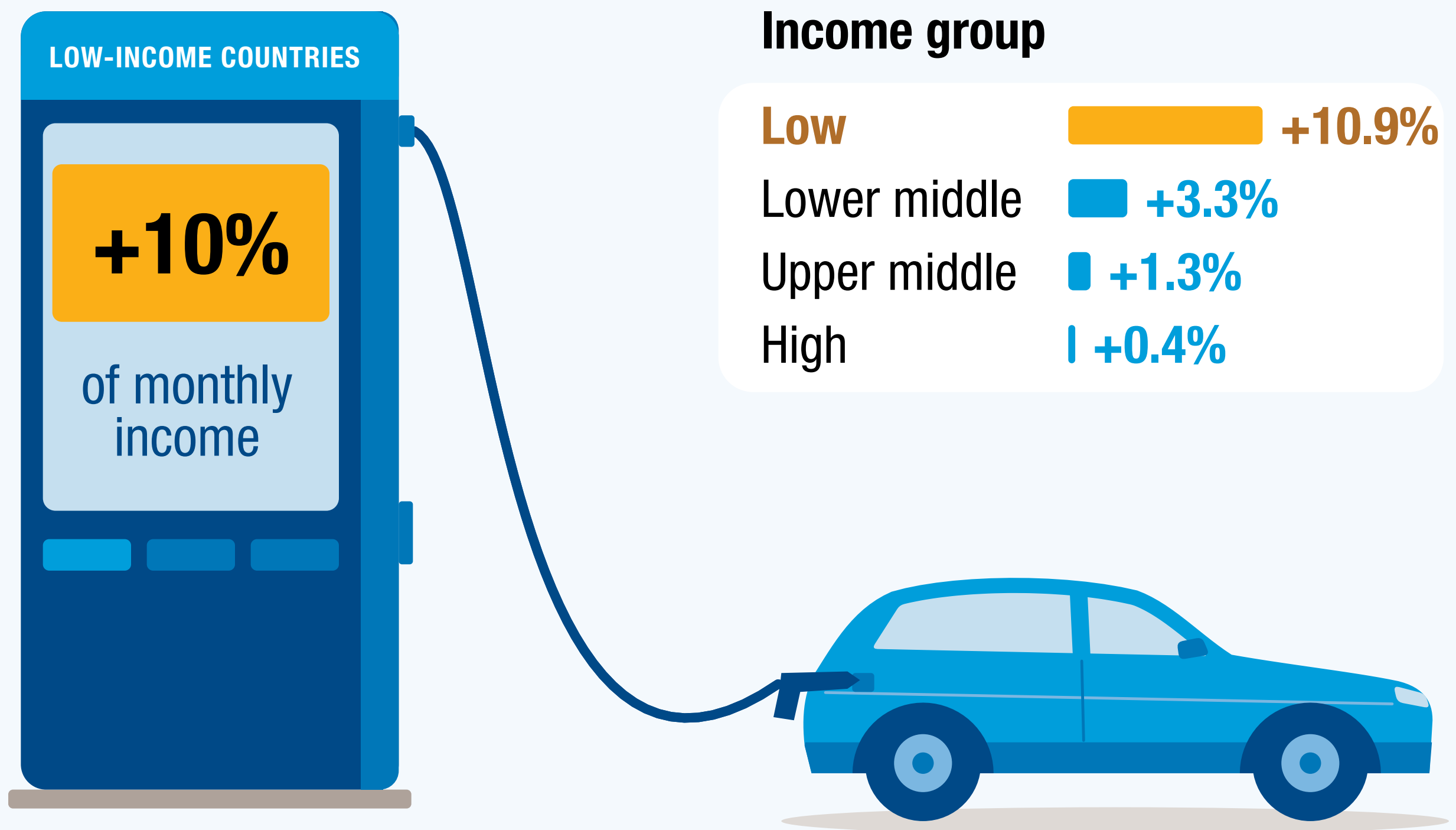
Note: Closing stocks of diesel/gas oil at the end of the month within national territories, including stocks held by governments. Data for 43 economies, for which data was available until July 2026, representing more than 60% of global diesel exports in 2025.



**These price increases
affect the cost of living**

Filling a car tank now takes an extra 10% of people's income in poor countries.

Increase in the cost of 40 litres of diesel in per cent of monthly gross domestic product per capita, median by income group



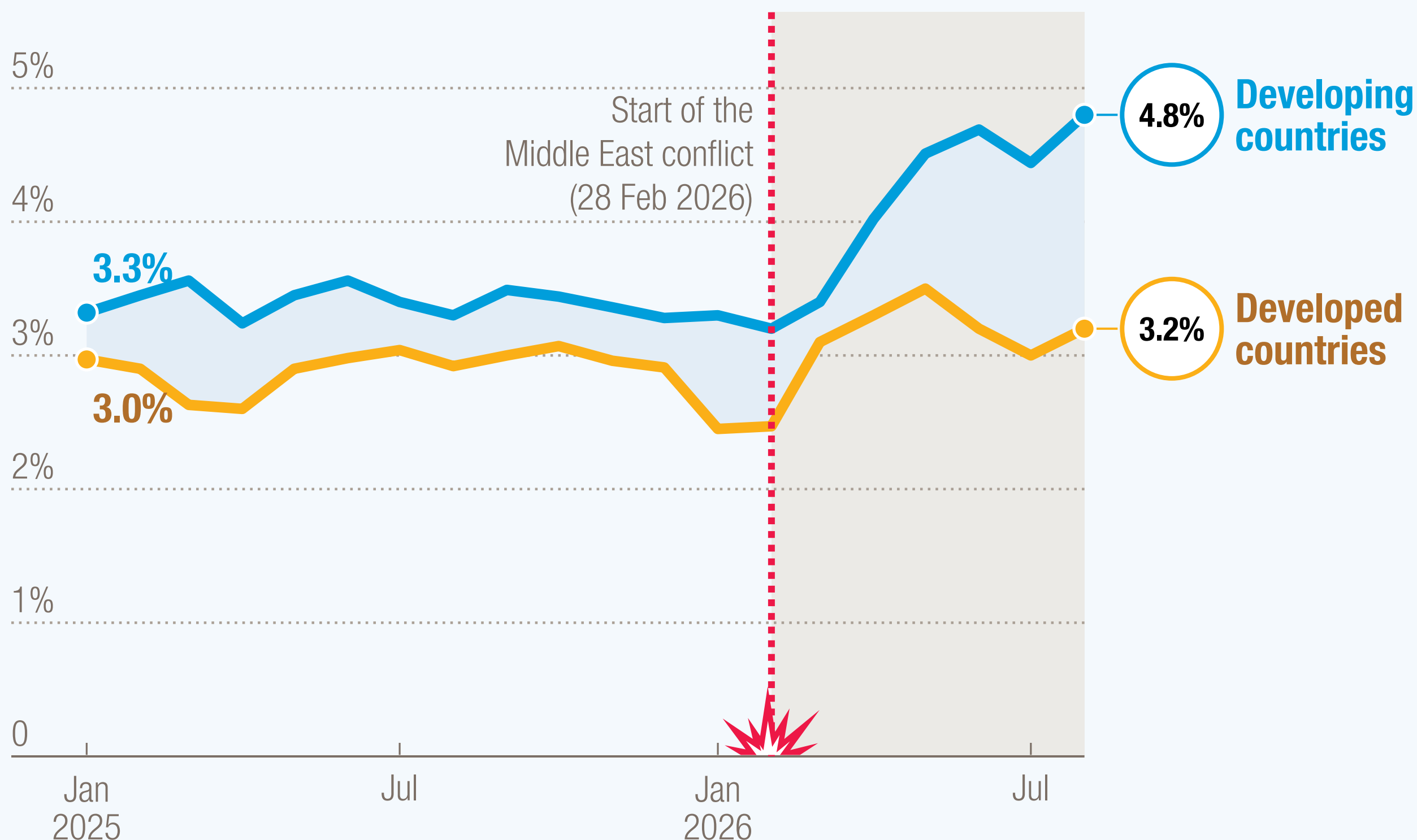
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on Global Petrol Prices, national sources, IMF and World Bank.

Note: Change of the local cost of 40 litres of fuel since the start of the Middle East conflict until 19 October 2026, compared to the six months before the conflict (weekly, 1 September 2025 – 23 February 2026) based on fuel prices and GDP in local currencies. Countries are classified according to the World Bank income groups.



Inflation is rising, particularly in developing countries.

Monthly year-on-year inflation rate in developed and developing countries, median by country group



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on national sources and IMF retrieved from LSEG Datastream.

Note: The depicted data covers 91 developing countries (33 in Africa, 23 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 35 in Asia and Oceania) and 47 developed countries for which inflation data was available for August 2026.

The surge in inflation is particularly steep in developing Asia and Oceania.

Monthly year-on-year inflation rate in developing countries, median by region



Latin America and the Caribbean

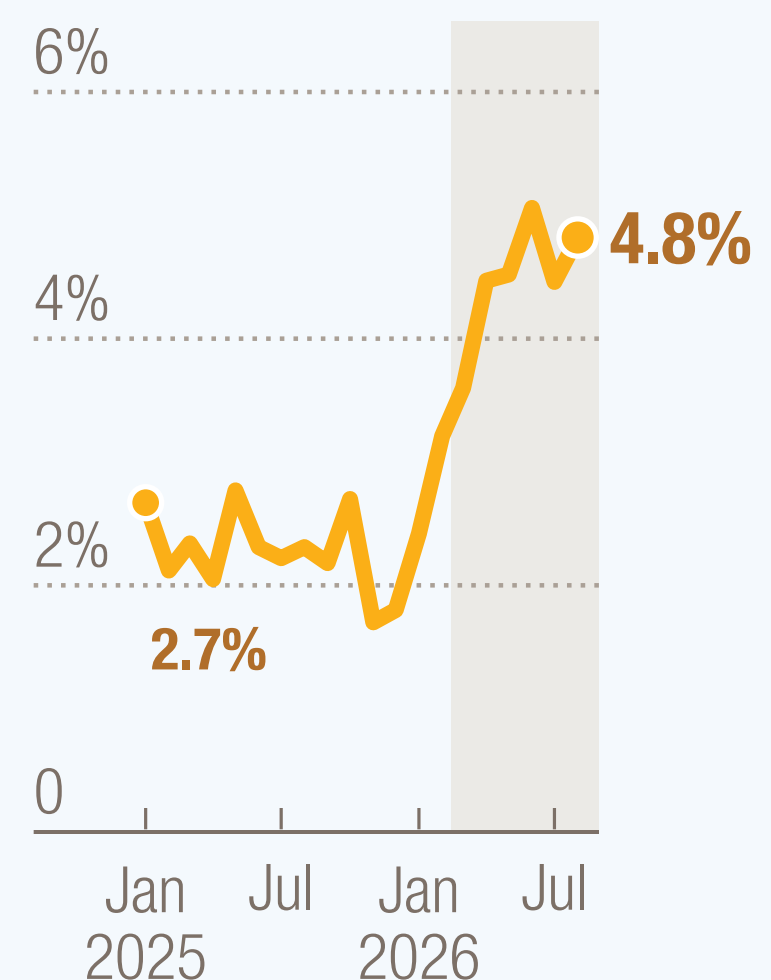
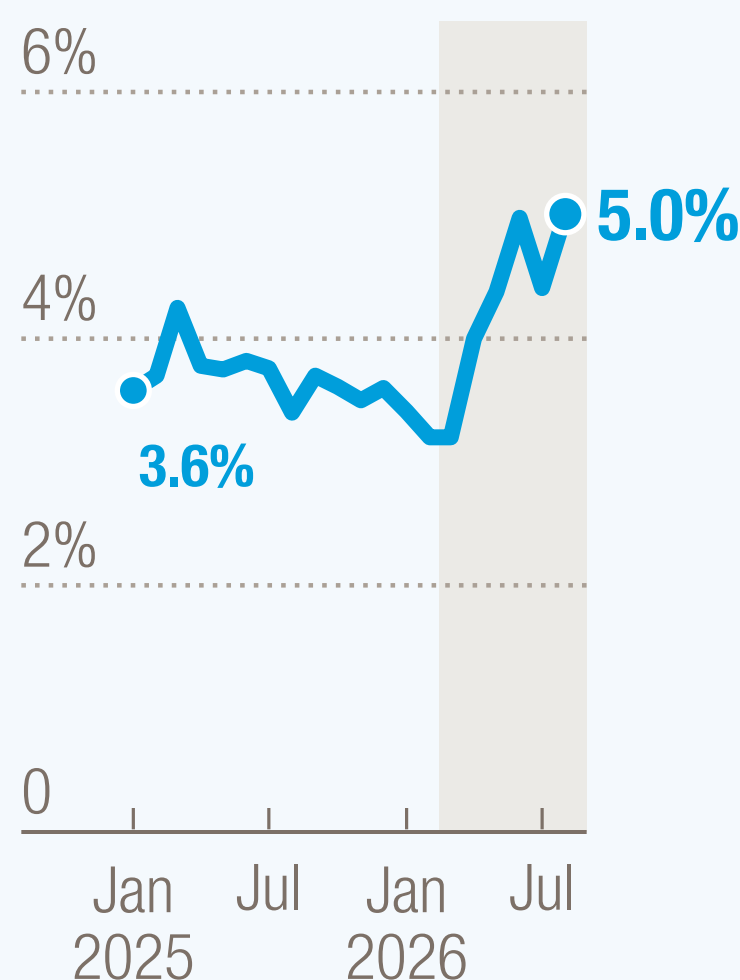
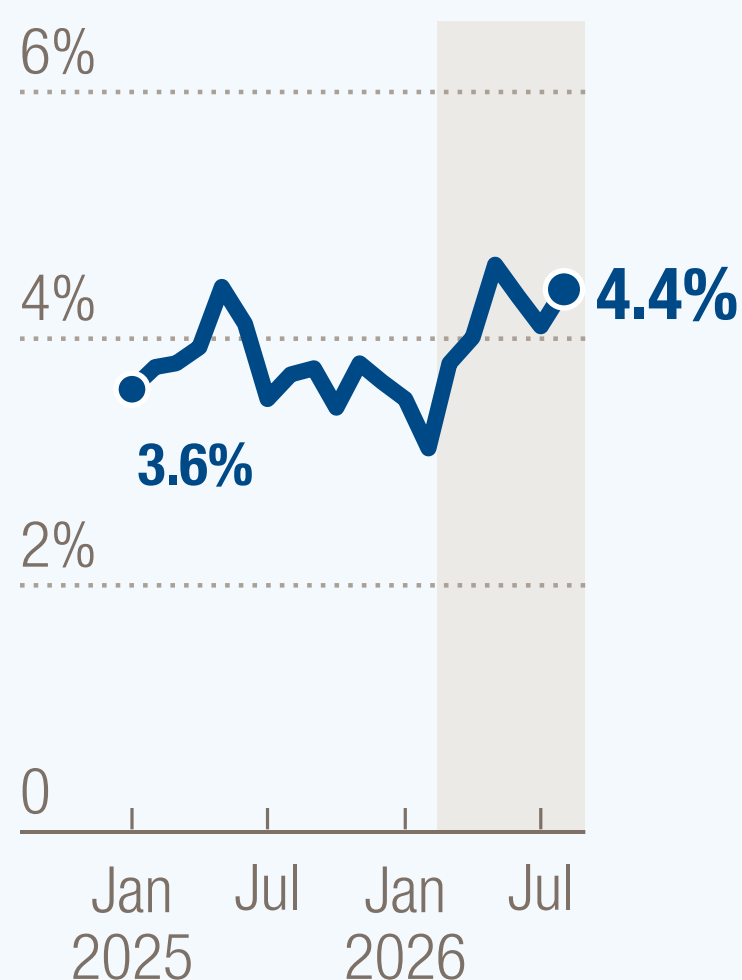


Africa



Developing Asia and Oceania

■ Since the start of the Middle East conflict (28 Feb 2026)



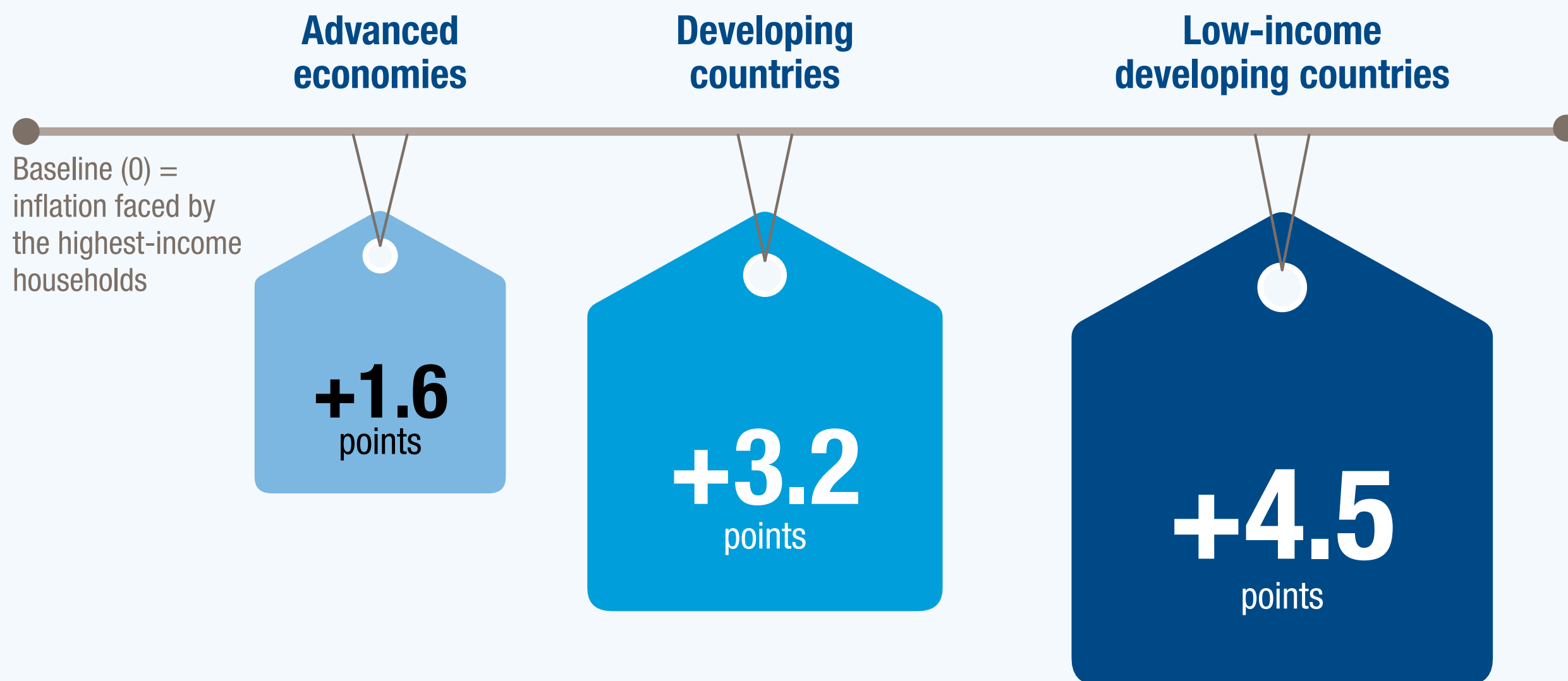
Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on national sources and IMF retrieved from LSEG Datastream.

Note: The depicted data covers 91 developing countries (33 in Africa, 23 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 35 in Asia and Oceania) for which inflation data was available for August 2026.



Cost-of-living crises hit poorer households hardest, everywhere.

Additional inflation faced by poorest compared to richest households per country group, in percentage points



Poorer households face much higher inflation than wealthier households during cost-of-living crises, because they spend more of their income on food and energy.

Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on IMF, WEO (2026).

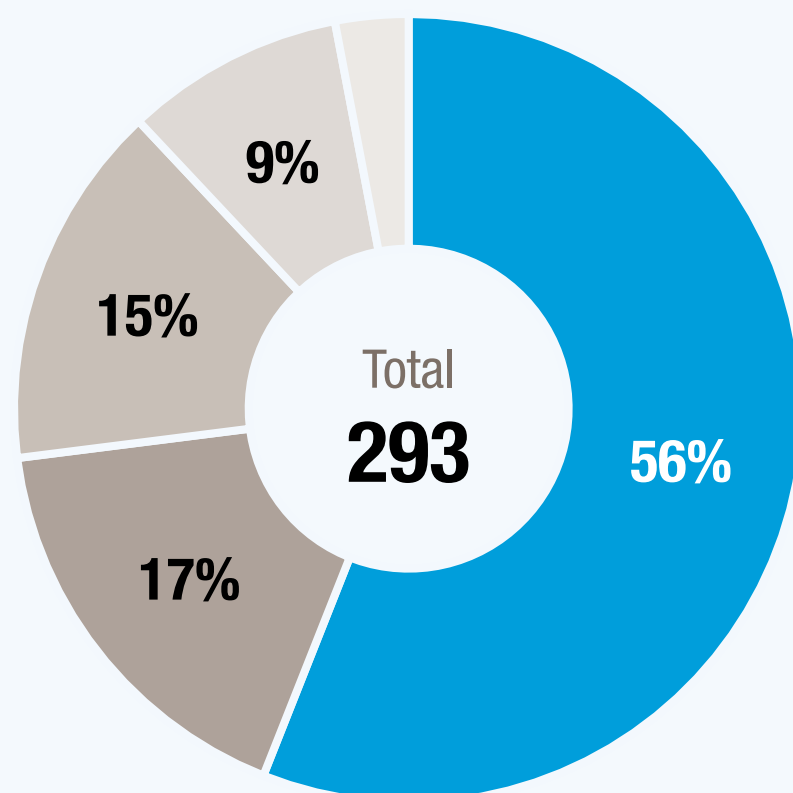
Note: Cost-of-living crises were defined as periods where prices rise faster for basic necessities than for other goods and services and nominal wage growth. Poorest and richest households are those in the bottom 20% and top 20% of the income distribution, respectively. Median values for each country group. Developing countries include “emerging market economies” and exclude low-income developing countries.



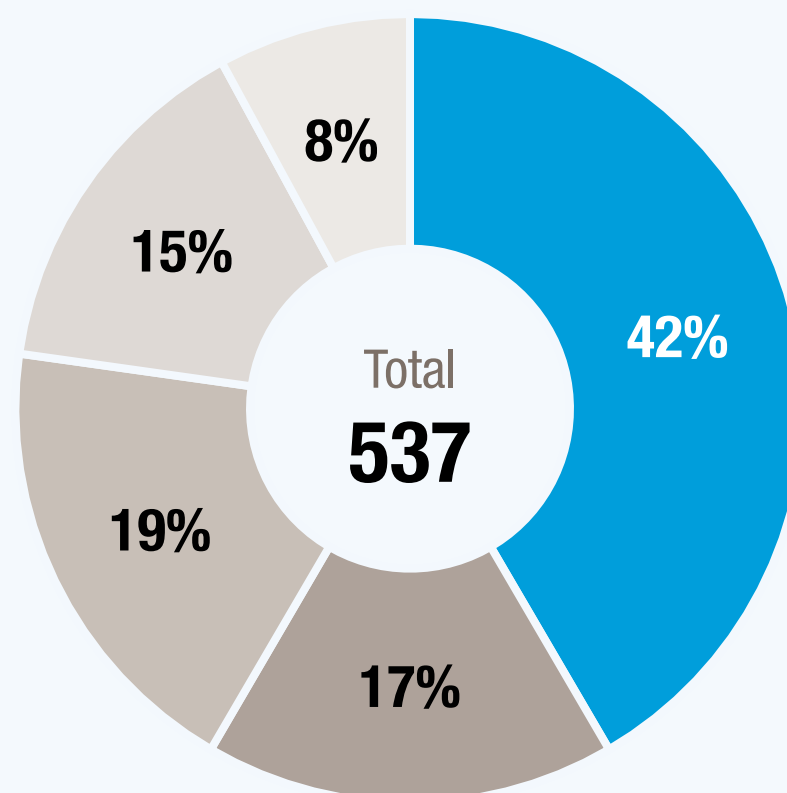
Countries have tried to cushion the shock mainly through fiscal measures.

Policy responses to the energy shock, by country group

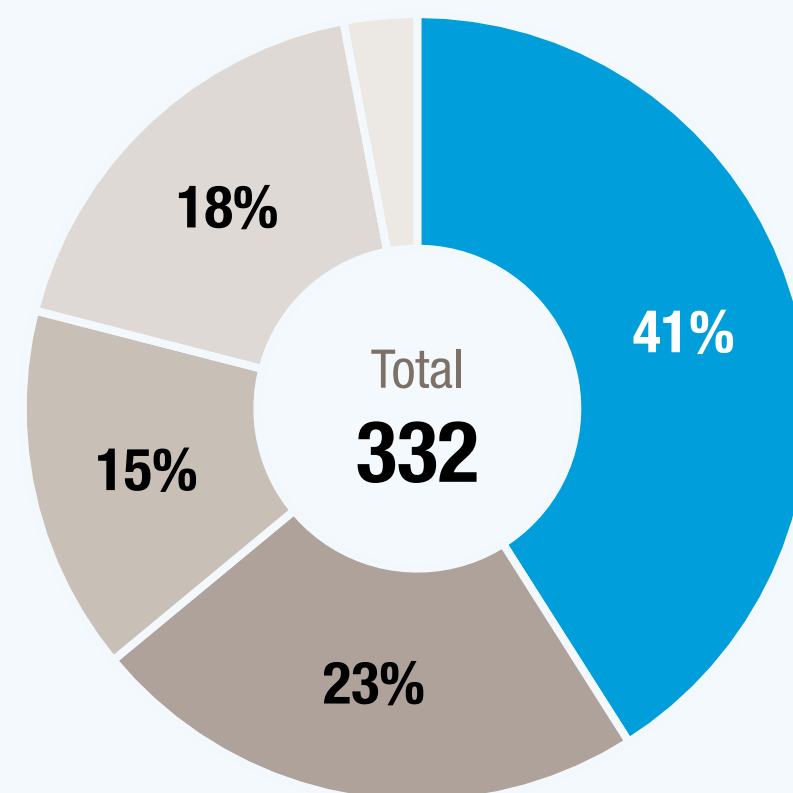
Fiscal **Demand/supply** **Monetary/foreign exchange** **Pricing** **Other**



Advanced economies



Developing countries

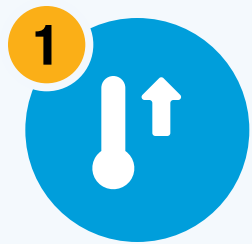


Low-income developing countries

Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based on IMF Global Policy Tracker: How Countries are Responding to the Economic Impact of the War in the Middle East.

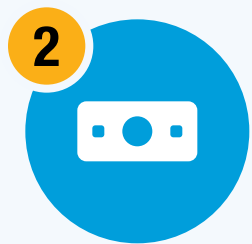
Note: Number of policy measures announced between February and September 2026. Demand/supply includes the release of strategic reserves. “Other” covers trade and financial measures. Developing countries include “emerging market economies” and exclude low-income developing countries.

Key considerations



Broader inflation

Increases in international energy prices quickly translate into higher domestic fuel prices. This raises the cost of living.



Fiscal pressures

Efforts to shield households from fuel price spikes amid prolonged disruptions to energy markets put greater pressure on government finances.



Monetary pressures

Rising fuel import costs are exacerbating foreign-exchange shortages. Hikes in monetary policy rates in response to increasing inflation raise borrowing costs and add to fiscal strains of debt-burdened economies.



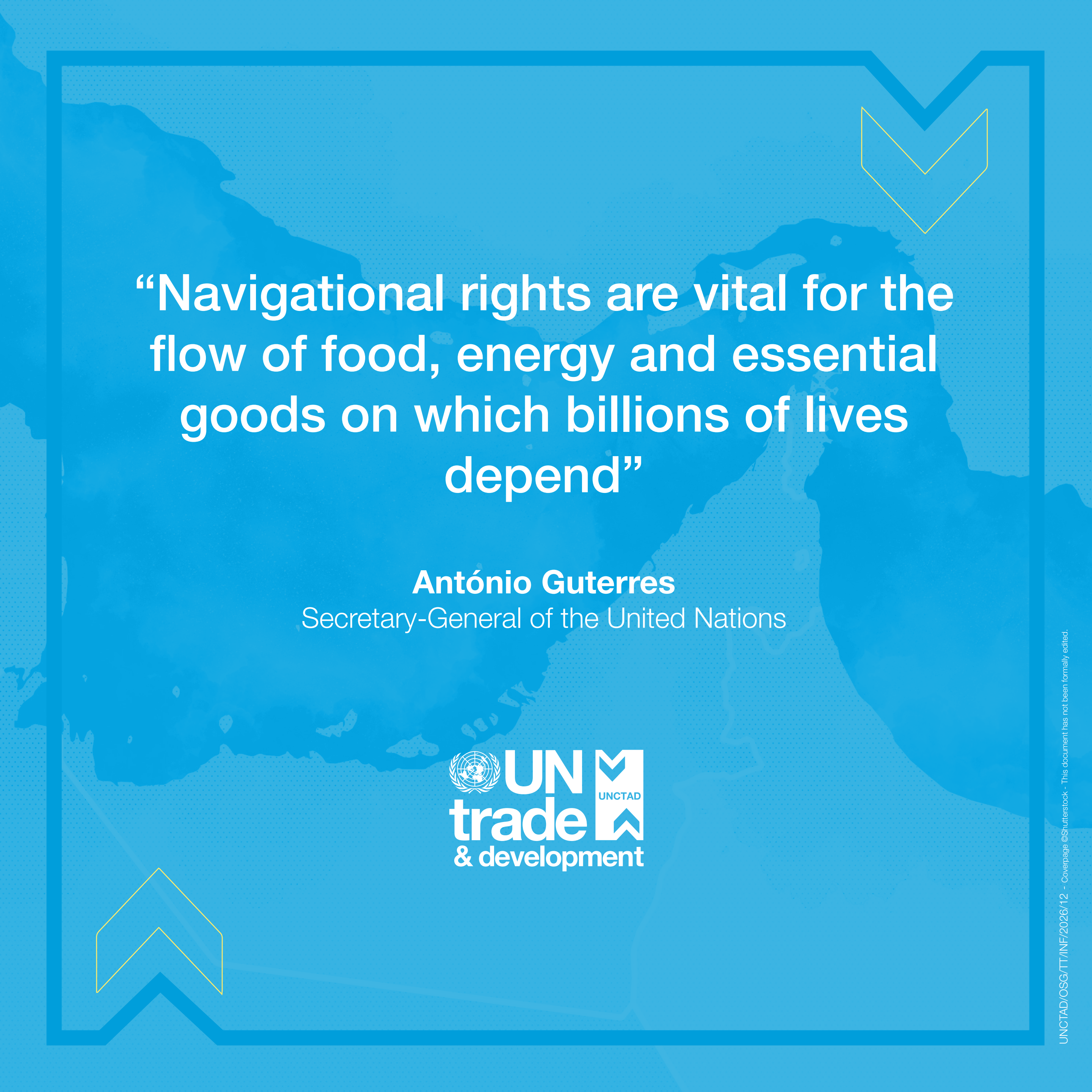
Economic slowdown

Amid soaring energy prices, global economic growth is likely to slow down to 2.6% in 2026.



Energy transition

High fossil fuel prices make the energy transition and grid investment even more critical for development, resilience, and energy security. But heightened volatility in commodity prices makes it more complex.



**“Navigational rights are vital for the
flow of food, energy and essential
goods on which billions of lives
depend”**

António Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations

