

YEMEN

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT UPDATE

January 2015

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN YEMEN

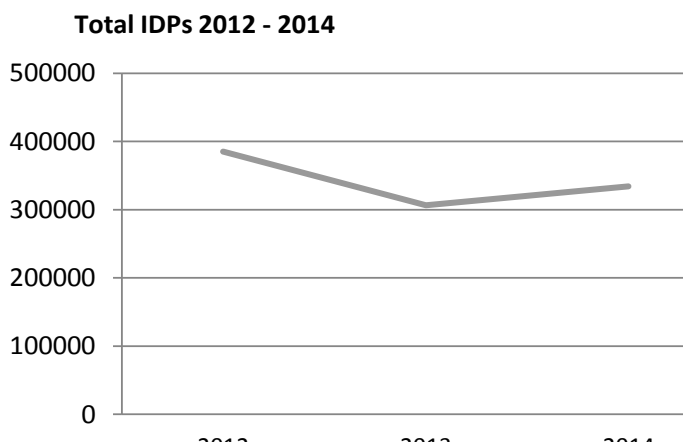
Internal displacement in Yemen poses a significant challenge for the Government of Yemen, UNHCR and its partners. There are currently over 330,000 registered Internally Displaced People (IDPs), who have fled violence and insecurity at home to seek safety in neighboring districts and governorates in Yemen.

Internal displacement in Yemen can be broadly characterized in two ways: as protracted, long-term displacement from conflict in the northern governorates; and as emergency, short-term displacement in the central and southern governorates. Conflict in the north of the country has escalated over the last decade with sustained unrest while southern governorates have seen emergency displacement as a result of equally violent but less long-term conflict. In 2014 new waves of displacement emerged in the northern governorates of Amran, Al Jawf and Marib.

Reflecting UNHCR's approach to internal displacement and the scale of the challenge in Yemen, UNHCR allocated around one third of its 2014 budget to IDP protection and assistance.

SCALE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN YEMEN

Twelve of the twenty two Governorates in Yemen are affected by internal displacement. Across Yemen there are currently 334,093 IDPs, the large majority of which are located in the northern governorates, with significant populations in Sa'ada (103,014 IDPs), Hajjah (88,603 IDPs), Amran (71,548 IDPs) and Sana'a (46,228 IDPs).



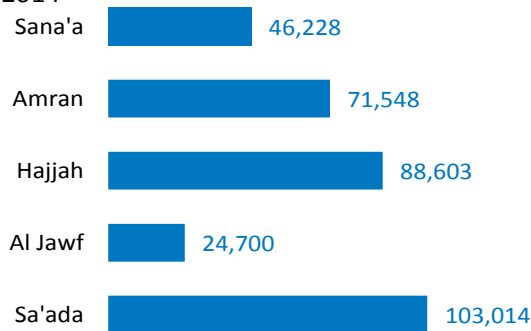
Only four per cent of the total of IDPs in Yemen live in a formal camp settings. All others live with host families, in rented rooms, and in hundreds of informal settlements.

Northern Governorates

In the north, successive rounds of conflict between the Government of Yemen and opposition Al Houthi forces since 2004 have caused large-scale internal displacement, first in Sa’ada, Hajjah, and subsequently in Amran, Sana’a and Al Jawf. While a ceasefire reached between the Government of Yemen and Al Houthi forces in February 2010 has remained in place, armed clashes have continued between Al Houthi and opposing tribal groups, as well as the military, and have led to new displacement. In 2014 Al Houthi forces took control of Amran and the capital, Sana’a, while also increasing their presence in Al Jawf, Al Baydah and Marib. Two waves of conflict-induced displacement in Amran led to around 47,000 newly displaced at the peak of the conflict in mid-2014. Many of these IDPs have been displaced multiple times while around 31,000 have returned yet are in need of assistance having lost their livelihoods. Verification of new displacement figures in areas of ongoing conflict such as Al Jawf, Marib and Al Baydah in late 2014, remains difficult because of limited humanitarian access, which is a prerequisite for monitoring, assessment of needs and targeted delivery of assistance.

Registered IDPs in Northern Governorates |

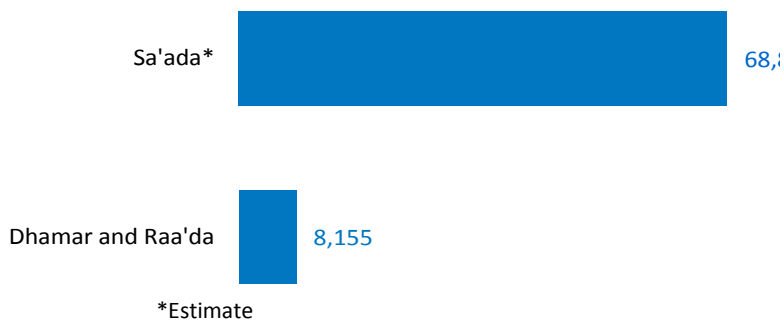
December 2014



The northern governorates host the only IDPs living in a formal camp setting. In Haradh, two registered IDP camps exist, Al Mazraq Camp one and Al Mazraq Camp three, where a total of 12,500 people live, and a few hundred IDPs remain on the site of Al Mazraq Camp Two which was officially closed on 2009.

At present, insecurity hinders most IDP returns and continues to limit humanitarian access while also causing additional displacement, notably in Al Jawf, Al Baydah and Marib. Returns have been possible in Sa’ada, Dhamar and Raa’da districts in 2013. A combined 76,773 individuals are estimated to have returned to their homes in these areas.

Returnees in Northern Governorates | December 2014



Southern Governorates

In April and May 2014, army incursions into areas occupied by Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Abyan and Shabwah led to some 20,000 IDPs seeking temporary shelter in neighboring areas before returning home within a few weeks. The registered number of IDPs displaced during conflict in Abyan in 2012 and who subsequently returned to their places of origin stands at 138,631. These returnees remain in UNHCR's database because of their ongoing vulnerabilities and the need to ensure their sustainable reintegration.

UNHCR'S APPROACH

UNHCR's response to internal displacement in Yemen is guided by four strategic objectives:

- Monitor and address protection needs and ensure respect of the rights of all IDPs.
- Provide life-saving assistance to IDPs and support to displacement-affected communities, on the basis of vulnerability, through the provision of shelter and NFIs and coordinating the management and service delivery in the few remaining IDP camps.
- Promote and support the creation of conditions which enable voluntary return or local integration in settlements and work toward durable solutions to displacement, including the gradual closure of the two remaining IDP camps.
- Reinforce and strengthen the response capacity of the Government and other stakeholders.

UNHCR, IDPs and the Cluster System

UNHCR coordinates the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced in Yemen as lead for the Protection Cluster and the joint Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFIs) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. In Yemen, where displacement occurs in a context of 14.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid, the cluster system ensures a coordinated response for service delivery and the monitoring and addressing of protection vulnerabilities of IDPs.

UNHCR'S WORK IN YEMEN

Ensuring IDPs are protected

Community protection responses are an integral element of UNHCR's work for IDPs in Yemen. UNHCR staff, through its own field monitoring, and members of community-based protection networks (CBPNs) and community centers conduct protection monitoring to identify and address legal issues as well as material needs and violations of the rights of IDPs. UNHCR works to ensure that there is a timely and appropriate response to reported abuses and other identified protection concerns, by closely working with the authorities and other protection actors present in the area. Since 2012, UNHCR has been strengthening its protection monitoring by expanding the total number and geographic coverage of CBPNs, from 66 in 2012 to 170 in 2014. The community centers and CBPNs, in addition to being important mechanisms for protection monitoring, also provide IDPs with legal aid and psychosocial support. Members of the CBPNs, as trained by UNHCR and its partners, are also playing a major role in referral to services and awareness raising with regard to important protection concerns such as the presence of mines and unexploded ordinance, the use of child soldiers, early marriage and other forms of child rights abuses and SGBV.

In addition to providing technical support to the Government of Yemen in undertaking IDP registration and maintenance of the IDPs database, UNHCR, together with the Executive Unit for IDPs and the World Food Program (WFP), has been prioritizing verification and improving existing and future records of registered IDPs. Ensuring objectively verified and time updated registration data of IDPs is a key protection task for UNHCR as it is the starting point for all assistance, on the basis of which the needs of IDP households for assistance are assessed. Verification exercises were recently completed in the emergency displacement of Abyan and Shabwah in May 2014. The updated, accurate IDP data on individual vulnerability facilitated planning and enhanced targeting of assistance to IDPs.

The community centers established by UNHCR in Amran, Haradh, Sa'ada, and Sana'a provide IDPs with access to legal advice, as well as social and psychosocial counselors, who also conduct home visits to IDPs. These centers play an important role in referrals to other service providers in their respective areas. In each of the two camps that UNHCR manages, there is also a women's community center where IDP women and girls can access counseling services, income-generating activities, vocational skills training and literacy classes.

The Protection Cluster, chaired by UNHCR, meets monthly at the national level in Sana'a and in different forms at field-level in Aden, Amran, Haradh and Sa'ada to coordinate the protection response. A range of UN agencies, international NGOs, and local NGOs, as well as the Executive Unit for IDPs participate. This is supported by a technical working group which includes WFP and the Executive Unit to improve work around registration. A Child Protection sub-cluster, led by UNICEF, operates both at the national and field-level; a sub-cluster on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is led by UNFPA at the national level; while UNHCR chairs SGBV working groups in Amran and Hajjah.

Providing life-saving assistance

UNHCR provides emergency shelter, NFI assistance and upgrades shelters to improve IDPs' living conditions. Recognizing that displacement affects not only IDPs but also the host communities, UNHCR support extends to both IDPs and affected communities.

The Shelter, NFI, CCCM Cluster meets at both the national level in Sana'a and at field-level in Aden, Amran, Haradh and Sa'ada. UNHCR and its partners manage the Al Mazraq IDP Camps which host some 12,500 IDPs in northern Yemen. The vast majority of IDPs live in informal settlements or private accommodation.

In its role as lead of the CCCM/Shelter/NFI Cluster, UNHCR coordinates the distribution of NFIs, where 105,000 people were assisted in the first 6 months of 2014. Distributed kits include clothes, cooking sets, dignity kits, hygiene kits, jerry cans, kitchen sets, mattresses, plastic mats, plastic sheets, sleeping mats, water buckets, and winter blankets.

These distributions included support for the majority of those who fled Amran, since the beginning of the year. The Cluster has provided some 34,000 IDPs and conflict affected individuals with NFIs in Amran, Sana'a and Al Jawf governorates since early 2014.

Creating durable solutions

A priority for UNHCR is securing durable solutions to displacement, which ultimately represent the best form of protection for IDPs and also contribute to national stability. The adoption of the National Policy on Internal Displacement in 2013 provides a legal framework for the development of durable solutions, taking one of three forms:

- Sustainable return to IDPs' place of origin;
- Sustainable local settlement in the area where IDPs have been displaced;
- Sustainable settlement and relocation elsewhere in the country.

IDPs have the right to choose from any of these solutions.

Key conditions for solutions to be durable are: long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; an adequate standard of living, access to food, water, housing, health care, and basic education; access to employment and livelihoods; access to effective mechanisms that restore IDPs' housing, land and property rights or provide them with compensation; as well as access to documentation, effective remedies and justice, and family reunification.

In the north, IDP profiling in 2010 and an inter-agency assessment in 2011 revealed that over 70% of IDPs hope to return home, but would only be prepared to do so once they are confident of lasting peace and security. While a number of IDP returns in the north are reported (over 76,000 registered) subsequent insecurity as a result of sporadic armed clashes, as well as a lack of access to sustainable livelihoods, has led many of these returnees to leave their place of return and once again become displaced.

UNHCR promotes the establishment of the requisite conditions of safety and dignity in areas of return and, at the same time, supports IDPs who wish to settle in the area of displacement or elsewhere in the country.

IDP involvement is integral to a lasting solution, therefore, UNHCR, together with the Government and the Protection Cluster, undertakes awareness-raising campaigns on durable solutions for IDPs in northern Yemen. For those IDPs opting for return, UNHCR provides assistance through the provision of shelter kits and the distribution of NFIs and UNHCR conducts protection monitoring upon return and addresses any possible protection needs. Additionally UNHCR promotes the involvement of development actors for reconstruction of basic services and the provision of livelihoods in areas of return.

Supporting IDPs' self-reliance through access to livelihood opportunities is of crucial importance not only in achieving a durable solution to displacement, but also promoting IDPs' dignity, reducing their dependence on aid and safeguarding against protection risks, especially for women and children.

In order to ensure that conditions are conducive to return, UNHCR calls on humanitarian and development partners to conduct mine clearance and mine risk education, advocate for land tenure, provision of basic services, livelihood opportunities, and activities to boost communities' recovery and resilience capacities.

In the southern governorate of Abyan, the return of IDPs displaced in 2012 to their areas of origin continued during 2013 and again following the renewed short-lived conflict in 2014. To ensure the sustainability of returns to Abyan, UNHCR provides targeted support for the physical safety and protection of returnees. Among activities concluded at the time were the distribution of shelter materials, shelter repair kits and Quick Impact Projects to support community resilience in the areas of return. UNHCR also established 10 protection/community centers in Abyan Governorate. The centers provide psychosocial counseling, training, and facilitate referral of SGBV survivors. Community-Based Protection Networks support protection monitoring of IDPs/returnees including awareness of their rights, legal assistance, psychosocial support and referral services.

Strengthening national responses

Primary responsibility for protecting, assisting, and securing durable solutions for IDPs rests with the Government of Yemen. UNHCR enjoys a close working relationship with its Executive Unit, as the responsible department for IDPs, providing technical assistance, verification and registration activities of the Executive Unit.

UNHCR has been instrumental in the adoption by the Government of a National Policy on Internal Displacement in June 2013. UNHCR has also undertaken a comprehensive review of relevant laws and regulations in order to recommend a national legal framework in line with international standards, as laid down in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. UNHCR has been supporting training, capacity building and other activities to further develop the capacity of local NGOs to assist and protect IDPs as they often have better local knowledge of local communities and can be instrumental in enhancing community acceptance. Thus, in mid- 2014 a CCCM training for local NGOs was conducted and aimed at:

- Introducing principles of CCCM roles and responsibilities to protect IDPs right to a life in safety and dignity.
- Enhancing capacity of partners to ensure proper camp coordination and management, promoting best practices in protection and response activities, and fostering know-how for camp design, set up and closure.

In 2014 UNHCR worked closely with the Executive Unit in responding to emergency displacement resulting from conflicts in Amran, Al Jawf and Al Baydah in the north and Abyan and Shabwah in the south. UNHCR supported the quick verification of figures established by the Executive Unit as a basis for subsequent rapid needs assessments and targeted and timely aid delivery.

UNHCR'S PRIORITIES IN THE AREA OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

UNHCR's involvement in the area of delivering protection and assistance services to the in internal displacement in Yemen, focuses on the following areas:

- **Quick and accurate verification of displacement figures:** Throughout 2014, UNHCR responded to several emergencies and short-term but large-scale displacements, based on a quick and accurate verification of estimates through close cooperation with WFP and the Executive Unit.

- **Cluster leadership and coordination:** UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and the joint Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFIs) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. August 2014 saw the creation of another sub-national Protection Cluster, in the southern governorate of Al Dhale, led by the Danish Refugee Council.
- **Timely responses to emergency displacement:** Working with the Government of Yemen, relevant clusters and partner organisations UNHCR will continue to prioritize the quick response to emergency displacement in shelter and NFI and protection services.
- **Durable solutions:** Optimal protection and assistance for Yemen's IDPs is to be ensured by the realisation of durable solutions, which, if sustainable, do not only benefit individual IDP communities but also host communities and as such act as an important catalyst toward reconstruction and stability.

Contacts:

Nick Stanton, Associate Public Information Officer, stanton@unhcr.org, Cell +967 71222 5087

Mogib Hassan, Senior Public Information and Communications Assistant, abdullmo@unhcr.org, Cell +967 71222 5065

Kevin Chulley, Shelter Cluster Coordinator, chulley@unhcr.org, Cell +967 71222 5114

Links:

Shelter Cluster Yemen www.sheltercluster.org/MENA/Yemen

Protection Cluster Yemen www.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/field-support/field-protection-clusters/countries/yemen.html

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement www.idpguidingprinciples.org