



Protection Cluster Yemen

PROTECTION
CLUSTER

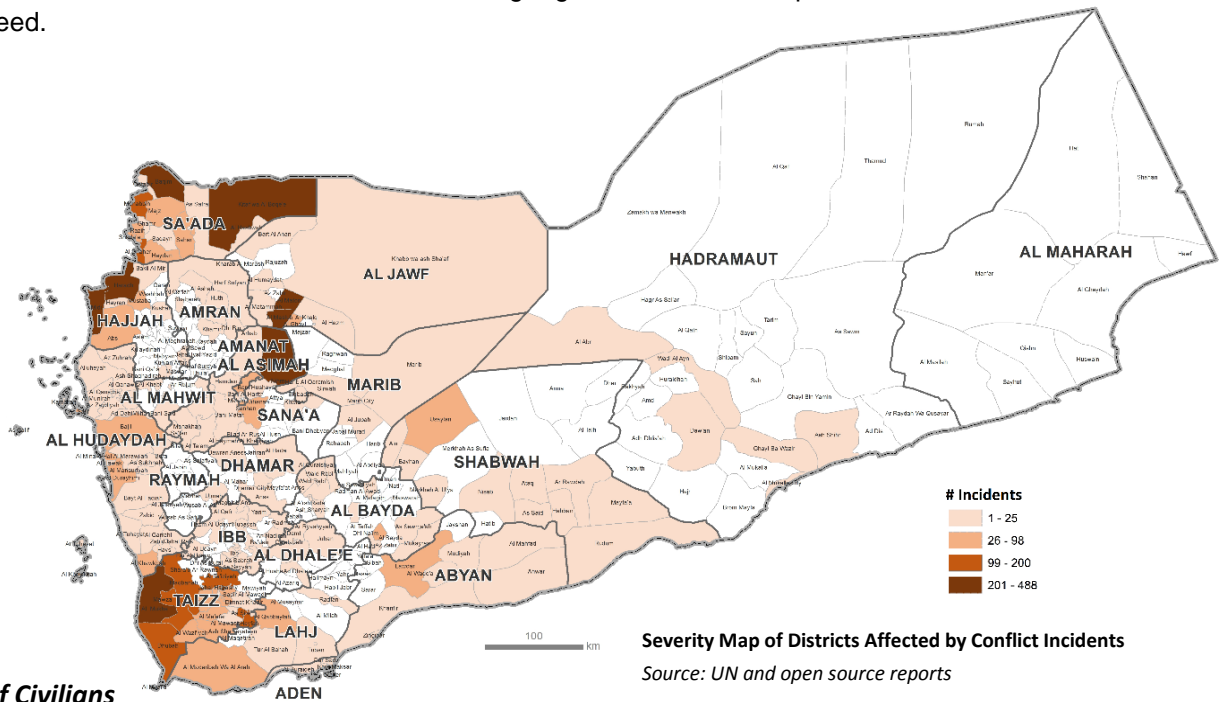
UPDATE

YEMEN

NOVEMBER 2017

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The recent spike in civilian casualties highlights once again the need to ensure protection of civilians and the growing protection needs for the conflict-affected population of Yemen. Displacement has increased since June, as have negative coping mechanisms for an already vulnerable population struggling with ongoing conflict, cholera and risk of famine, necessitating urgent and immediate protection and assistance to those in need.



Protection of Civilians

Recent months have witnessed a spike in fighting, resulting in a dramatic increase in civilian casualties to their highest monthly levels since 2016.¹ Ongoing, intense conflict in Taizz, particularly around the frontlines near Mawza, as well as airstrikes in Sana'a at the end of August and Sa'ada in early November, resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties. According to UN and open source reports, the number of armed clashes in the first nine months of 2017 already exceeds all of 2016, while airstrikes already near double all of last year. Conflict incidents such as these have affected more than 57% of all districts in Yemen in the last year, with the worst 10%, on average, witnessing an airstrike or armed clash every day. According to OHCHR, civilian deaths were highest in Sana'a, followed by Sa'ada and al-Dhale'e, while injuries were highest in Sana'a, followed by Taizz and al-Hudaydah. Airstrikes remain the leading cause of death and injury in Yemen, accounting for nearly 42% of all civilian casualties.

Internal Displacement

Internal displacement has increased since June 2017, with more than 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 956,000 IDP returnees in Yemen, as of September 2017.² Conflict has resulted in approximately

¹ OHCHR, Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/36/33.

² Report of the Task Force on Population Movement, TFPM – Yemen, 16th Report, September 2017.

150,000 new displacements in 2017, with Taizz (54%) and Sa'ada (21%) representing the majority of displaced persons this year. Among IDPs, some 23% reside in collective centres or spontaneous shelters where living conditions can pose major protection concerns. A recent baseline assessment of 364 IDP hosting sites in Amanat Al Asimah, Amran, Dhamar and Marib conducted by the Shelter/CCCM Cluster in coordination with the Protection Cluster, found 10% of sites to have critical protection needs (compared to 47% with high protection needs). Assessed protection needs included persons with specific needs, risks of GBV, reports of child labour and begging, and risks from mines and UXOs. Protection partners are working with the Shelter/CCCM Cluster to respond, while the assessment continues in other governorates.

Vulnerability and Persons with Specific Needs

Conflict, cholera and risk of famine continue to take their toll, resulting in new vulnerabilities and protection consequences for those who have suffered the loss of heads of households, family separation and the breakdown of community structures. On 6 November, the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) announced the 'temporary' closure of all of Yemen's air, sea and land crossings, which until lifted, risks severe harm to the situation of vulnerable households. Initial reports already show a surge in assistance requests at IDP community centers, including those now unable to meet basic needs, access medical care, or facing threats of eviction. Based on preliminary results from the most recent multi-cluster location assessment, borrowing and indebtedness were reported by 20% of respondents, while 5% indicated resort to either child marriage, begging or exploitative labor as negative coping mechanisms. Despite mounting psychosocial support and mental health needs of the population, the assessment also showed that only 7% of respondents reported the availability of mental health services and 8% psychosocial assistance in their areas.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In Taizz, continued conflict and renewed military offensives in the west and the coast toward Hudaydah as well as Taizz City have continued to result in civilian casualties and further displacement. Major incidents include airstrikes as well as intense shelling of Taizz city, leading to IDPs and civilians trapped in the fighting and civilian deaths. On 2 November, shelling in a residential neighborhood resulted in the deaths of five children and injury of two others. Some 34,000 IDPs were reportedly newly displaced in Taizz since July 2017, bringing the total number of IDPs displaced from Taizz to more than 550,000, or some 27% of all IDPs in Yemen. Protection and other cluster partners are currently responding to the recent arrival in Lahj of some 300 IDP families from Taizz due to fighting, including ensuring basic needs, protection monitoring, and addressing social cohesion concerns.

The situation in the north in Sa'ada continues to be highly impacted by airstrikes and ongoing fighting along the border. Major incidents in Sa'ada include airstrikes on 8 August and 13 September, as well as an airstrike on a busy night market on 1 November which resulted in multiple civilian casualties. Meanwhile, a recent assessment by Protection Cluster partner, ADRA, found that 60% of IDPs were residing in active conflict zones, and 36% adjacent to conflict. After Taizz, neighboring Hajjah Governorate (375,000 IDPs) and Sa'ada (294,000 IDPs) represent the second and third largest governorates of origin for IDPs in Yemen.

Airstrikes in Sana'a have spiked, including two major incidents resulting in civilian casualties



Displaced mother and child at Hudaydah IDP settlement. Credit: S. Algahoum

occurred at the end of August, including airstrikes on a hotel in Arhab district and in the residential area of Faj Attan, which the SLC subsequently admitted to be accidental and unintentional. Sana'a and the larger area of Amanat Al Asimah represent the origin of 18% of IDPs in Yemen.

In the south, the conflict-affected population continued to be affected by fighting in Al-Dhale'e, Abyan and Lahj. Highlighting ongoing concerns around housing, land and property, Protection and Shelter Cluster partners are urgently responding to the needs for some 60 *al-Muhamasheen* families evicted in al-Dhale'e. Meanwhile, floods in Almaqatera district in Lahj governorate reportedly resulted in more than ten persons killed and more than 30 missing.

PROTECTION RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

Despite gaps in funding and constraints on humanitarian access, Protection Cluster partners continue to respond to the protection needs of the conflict-affected and displaced population. Recent highlights include:

- Two-days of strategic planning meetings were held by Protection Cluster partners in August, involving more than 40 participants from Sana'a and regional hubs, during which the cluster strategy was revised and validated, and technical sessions held on specific protection programs. Based on these, the Protection Cluster National Strategy was finalized, the first updated strategy since September 2015.
- Protection Guidance for the Cholera Response, addressing protection sensitive response measures and additional protection consequences on cholera-affected households and individuals, was rolled out and shared with the joint Health/WASH Cholera Response, as well as endorsed for inclusion in the revised Integrated Cholera Response Plan.
- In response to the eviction of marginalized *al-Muhamasheen* IDPs in al-Dhale'e whose homes were burnt by the host community, the Protection Cluster, including al-Nebras and ACF, provided initial needs assessments and coordinated immediate assistance.
- The Child Protection Sub-Cluster conducted a training needs assessment for 30 partners on key strategic priorities of psychosocial support, Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, mine risk education, case management, unaccompanied and separated children and victim assistance. Among respondents, 81% of whom were national NGOs, more than 60% had not received or need more training.
- In Sana'a and Ibb, OHCHR conducted awareness sessions on access to basic social services and strengthening current referral mechanism for community members, activists and media personnel.
- In order to improve consistency and accountability, UNICEF and Save the Children agreed to re-establish the role of Child Protection Sub-Cluster Co-Lead. In



Protection partners participate in strategic working meetings in Sana'a

PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY

Monitor key protection issues (including violations of IHL/IHRL, displacement, vulnerable populations, gender-based violence and child protection) in order to **identify persons in need of assistance**, inform the humanitarian response and advocate for the protection of civilians

Provide **life-saving protection assistance and services** to vulnerable, conflict-affected individuals, including children and gender-based violence survivors

Develop **community-based responses** in order to prevent, mitigate or address protection needs and risks, and enhance individual and community coping strategies and conflict resolution

Strengthen the capacity of partners, service providers, civil society and authorities on protection

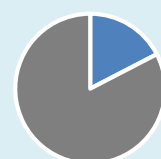
Mainstream and integrate protection into all sector and cluster-specific humanitarian responses

light of the critical importance of psychosocial support in child protection and growing numbers of unaccompanied and separated children (Yemeni and non-Yemeni), technical working groups led by CYPO and IOM were activated to ensure a strong common approach and direction among child protection partners.

- Yemen Women Union (YWU), supported by UNFPA, assisted GBV survivors in ten governorates through the distribution of dignity and family kits, as well as psycho-social support, shelter, medical, legal support and multi-purpose cash assistance. YWU also provided interactive theater on child marriage and female genital mutilation for communities in al-Hudaydah and Hadramawt.
- The IASC Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)/ Community Based Complaint Mechanisms (CBCM) Task Team and HCT Protection Advisor co-facilitated a workshop for UN focal points on action plans and operating procedures to address PSEA issues.
- In Lahj, INTERSOS, supported by UNHCR, intervened on behalf of IDP children unable to enroll in school due to lack civil documentation, including birth registration. Negotiations were held with the Ministry of Education and local authorities to extend enrollment periods and obtain supplemental documentation.
- Protection Cluster field support missions were conducted to Hudaydah and Ibb in September and October, involving workshops on protection needs assessments and developing hub-level strategies on key protection priorities, in addition to protection mainstreaming support missions by the HCT Protection Advisor in Aden and Hudaydah in August and September.
- In Amanat al-Asimah, Life Makers Meeting Place Organization (LMMPO) surveyed service providers to improve service delivery for marginalized and vulnerable children, and launched two child-friendly spaces and awareness raising on mine/UXOs and first aid, among others.
- In Aden, the Sub-National Protection Cluster facilitated a workshop on the In-Depth Protection Monitoring Tool as well as Protection Cluster Inter-Agency Referral Form for 28 partners from the Aden and Al-Mukalla Hubs. More intensive workshops are planned for all partners and the Moral Guidance Department of the Ministry of Interior.

KEY FIGURES

PEOPLE IN NEED	11.3 M
PEOPLE IN ACUTE NEED	2.9 M
IDPs	2.0 M
IDP RETURNEES	1.0 M
PERSONS TARGETED	3.5 M
PERSONS REACHED	1.5 M
FUNDING REQUESTED*	72.2 M
FUNDING MET	19.7 M
UNMET NEEDS	52.5 M



27%
FUNDED

*Funding figures as of 12 November 2017

IN FOCUS: INTERACTIVE AWARENESS RAISING BY YEMEN WOMEN'S UNION

Founded in the 1960s, Yemen Women's Union (YWU) has branches throughout Yemen with the overall objective to promote women's rights and empower women. With and through the work of its branches, YWU has programs to support conflict-affected and displaced persons, women and children, in protection, multi-sectoral GBV and other sectoral programming. Since 2012, YWU, with the support of UNFPA, has been raising awareness in communities on harmful practices in society through the use of interactive theatre. Using trained professional actors and actresses as well as personnel who engage and manage audience participation, community awareness is raised on sensitive issues such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. To date, this interactive form of awareness raising has been used in Hudaydah, Ibb, Hajjah, Amran and Hadramaut. In an example of the positive impact of such activities, following the interactive theatre performance, tribal sheikhs in Amran met together and signed a compact stating their commitment not to permit marriage of children under 18 years of age.

Awareness raising is a strategic activity of the Protection Cluster to target key populations on protection issues ranging from availability of specialized and non-specialized services, community safety in conflict, mine risk education, civil documentation for the displaced, not least on GBV and child protection.



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