



Situation Update, No. 17 Covering the period of 19 – 21 April 2015

Analysis

An intensification of airstrikes in recent days by coalition forces under Operation Decisive Storm, particularly in Sa'ada and Sana'a, has increased the risk of collateral damage, particularly to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

While there does not appear to be a deliberate aim to harm civilians, the scale and intensity of the strikes has reduced civilian safety to a level of secondary importance. The ultimate consequence of this will be felt by the civilian population, which was already in great need of humanitarian support across many sectors even prior to the commencement of the current conflict.

The result now is a major humanitarian crisis with the humanitarian needs relating to the most basic of necessities, such as food, water, shelter and fuel. As food insecurity increases, families and individuals will be forced to resort to a range of negative coping mechanisms, the impact of which will be felt the most severely by those that are the most vulnerable, including women, children and older persons.

Coalition forces should immediately desist from the reckless endangering of civilians and civilian infrastructure and guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian actors to meet the needs of thousands of desperate Yemenis.

Key Protection Points in Summary

- Initial OHCHR verification reports suggest that during the period of 19 – 20 April at least 20 civilians were killed including 6 children and 2 women, and at least 125 injured.

Casualties since 26 March 2015		
	Killed	Injured
Men	333	842
Women	31	35
Children	92	65
Total	456	942

- Concerns are growing over the needs of IDPs in Mareb governorate. According to UNHCR, conflict in Mareb is spreading, forcing families into displacement. Estimates of IDP numbers in the governorate vary between 400 - 550 households, mainly concentrated in Mareb valley and Mareb town. Humanitarian assistance has not reached these IDPs whose priority needs are related to food, shelter

and NFIs. The Humanitarian Forum Yemen (HFY) is mobilizing its network of local NGO partners in Mareb to provide further needs and to conduct needs assessments where possible.

- Further to information passed to UNHCR by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), approximately 400 families are stranded in the mountains of Sa'ada and have sought shelter in caves. They are in great humanitarian need and are trying to leave but are unable to do so owing to the fear of further airstrikes and a lack of transportation. Additional reports have been received of other IDPs in Sa'ada, who are stuck in various locations.
- Save the Children has published results of its findings following a Multi-Sector Rapid Needs Assessment conducted in Amran governorate between 12 – 13 April. According to the findings of the assessment, almost all of the IDPs and the host community are urgently in need of food, NFIs and child protection interventions in addition to needs across other sectors. In terms of child protection, the current crisis has had a major impact on the sense of security of children, impacting on their wellbeing resulting in behavioral changes. In this regard, the response priorities include:
 - Recreational activities for war-affected children
 - Provision of an open space for children (child friendly spaces) to play and learn about risks, dangers in the environment and safety
 - Psycho-social support for war-affected children
 - Resumption of education

Information by Governorate

Amran Governorate

Based on information that many IDP families had settled in three schools in Khamir district, **UNHCR** in collaboration with members of the Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPNs) in Khamir conducted field visits to assess the needs of the IDP families residing in the schools. Three schools were visited (Al-Shyama, Emran and Am Salamah), but the actual number of IDP families at these schools was not that high. Two schools (Al-Shayma and Am Salamah) are functioning normally and were full with students, while Emran school has been closed for rehabilitation purposes. No IDP families were found there. Further information received from CBPNs, indicated that a small number of families from Sa'ada had arrived in Amran today and settled in Eiyalsuriah district near to the Amran central prison. These IDPs have spontaneously pitched tents on private land, which might expose to them eviction. A monitoring visit is to be conducted to gather more information pertaining to the situation of these IDPs.

Hajjah Governorate

MSF - Spain reported that a rapid assessment was conducted in Bani through which around 200 IDP families were found in Bani Kadesh. MSF – Spain is hoping to conduct another assessment in Alokasha where more than 120 IDP families are said to be residing. The IDPs are in urgent need of shelter and WASH interventions, as well as NFIs.

UNHCR's partner, **Al Amal Association** reported that on 21 April coalition airstrikes targeted the security department, two restaurants, Midi road, and other areas in Haradh town. Many IDPs were seen fleeing to other districts and are in need of NFIs and other assistance.

Sa'ada Governorate

UNHCR Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPNs) reported that that coalition forces distributed leaflets instructing civilians to evacuate their residences within four days. In consequence, movement of IDPs

from Sa'ada to Amran governorate is reported to continue and IDPs are also leaving cities and concentrating in villages.

UNHCR's partner, **Al Bena Development Association** reported that on Monday, 20 April coalition airstrikes targeted the communications network in the Khulan mountains. Further airstrikes also took place resulting in civilian casualties.

A MIRA assessment was completed in Safra and Sahar districts in Sa'ada Governorate on 21 April. Two teams were able to cover all targeted areas safely. Originally, the intention was to conduct the assessment in one day on 20 April, but because the targeted areas were widely scattered and the risk for the team to stay too late in the afternoon, the assessment was extended for a second day. OCHA aims to publish a draft of the findings of the assessment on 25 April 2015 in coordination with the Executive Commission (EC) and local authorities.

Sana'a Governorate

According to the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** on 20 April, at least 20 civilians were killed, including 6 children and 2 women, and at least 120 injured as a consequence of airstrikes that targeted a military base in Faj Attan in Sana'a city. Hundreds of homes and private businesses within a few kilometers radius of the military base were damaged reaching as far as the areas of Al-Tahrir Square owing to the magnitude of the explosions.

Information received from a journalist flagged the situation of juveniles in a home for juvenile delinquents. **UNHCR** contacted the center and learned that the authorities have promised to provide support but nothing has reached them to-date while their supplies are about to be depleted. Their main needs currently are in relation to water, gas for cooking and food supplies. In relation to medical support, they need first aid items only, while they not currently need NFIs. It was further indicated that due to the shortage of supplies and following a meeting with the Public Prosecutor, it was decided to release five (5) children who had committed simple offences. Therefore, the total number of children at the center is now 15.

Further to information received from members of the Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPNs), many families from Sa'ada have arrived in Sana'a (Amanat Al-Asimah). Preliminary indications are as follows:

- 7 families in Al-Hasabah
- 14 families in Aser
- 2 families in Al-Da'eri street
- 1 family in Dares
- 2 families in Gader
- 10 in Shamlan
- 3 in Al-Naser st. in Sho'ub
- 8 in Taiz street

Taiz Governorate

Based on information provided by the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, at least one (1) civilian was killed and five (5) civilians injured, including three (3) women, in two incidents owing to the intensification of street battles, which have spread to the areas of Al-Muroor, Masbah, Al-Khasab, Deir Basha, and the old airport in Taiz Governorate. Fighting is taking place between members of the Popular Committees who are allied to Ansar Allah, Central Security Forces and the Republican Guard, and local armed opposition groups who are supported by the 35th Armoured Division of the army. On 20 April, at least one medical staff personnel was killed, and another injured as a consequence of sniper attacks attributed to members of the Popular Committees. OHCHR has received reports describing the desperate humanitarian

situation in Taiz Governorate. The key referral hospital reports that they are unable to mobilize their ambulances owing to lack of fuel, and morgue facilities are unable to keep up with the number of casualties.

Protection concerns have prevented the local community from accessing basic social services. During the period 12 – 20 April, civilians in Taiz were left without electricity. Access to drinking water was limited, as prices have doubled leaving a large proportion of the population without sufficient water to drink. Water costs have now risen from \$ 17 USD to \$ 75 for 1,500 – 2000 litres, and cooking gas prices have also soared from \$ 7 to \$ 12 USD. In addition, it is reportedly difficult to find these items in the local markets. Fuel is also scarce with prices increasing from \$ 13 to \$ 130 USD per 20 litres. For this reason, families that wish to flee the conflict are unable to do so due to a lack of transport. Further to this, the key market areas of Al-Tahrir Al-Alaa Street and Jamal Street have been closed off after being flooded with solid waste.

Following reports that members of the Popular Committees have taken over the following locations for military advantage, namely the schools of Al-Saheed Al-Hakimi, Al-Ma'had and Al-Fani, Falastin hospital, and a private home. Given this development, opposition forces in Taiz have indicated that these locations will be targeted raising a major concern that civilians mayface greater risks.

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