

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The military escalation to capture al-Hudaydah and its port has reached decisive stages, with potentially catastrophic consequences for civilians. As a result, the physical safety of civilians is being increasingly threatened by indiscriminate attacks as fighting spills into al-Hudaydah city, while hostilities remain active along other frontline locations such as Marib, Taizz and al-Bayda. More than ever, ensuring protection of civilians remains paramount, as does addressing the growing protection needs for the conflict-affected and displaced population of Yemen.

Protection of Civilians

Fighting in Yemen escalated dramatically in late-May, when the frontlines in al-Hudaydah began to make rapid advances to the edge of al-Hudaydah City. As documented by OHCHR, the governorates most affected by casualties in the first five months of 2018 were Sa'ada (19%), al-Hudaydah (16%), Taizz (15%) and Sana'a and Amanat al-Asimah (14%). According to the Protection Cluster's Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, a total of 844 incidents of armed violence with civilian impact were recorded in the last six months in monitored governorates, resulting in 1,828



Displaced mother and daughter on the streets of al-Hudaydah city. Credit: UNHCR / S. Mantoo

civilian casualties, 26% of which were women and children. Illustrating the vast insecurity facing the conflict-affected population, civilians were killed and injured most frequently inside their homes (27%), at public services and infrastructure sites (16%), including main roads and governmental compounds, and in cars or buses (11%). A total of 2,308 civilian structures were damaged, illustrating the far-reaching damage caused to civilian structures by armed violence. Houses were the most frequently impacted structures, as well as civilian infrastructure including main roads, bridges, telecommunication infrastructure, governmental compounds, ports, and airports. Other structures used by civilians were also damaged, including food and water infrastructure, education centers, healthcare facilities, aid, protected sites, and prisons.

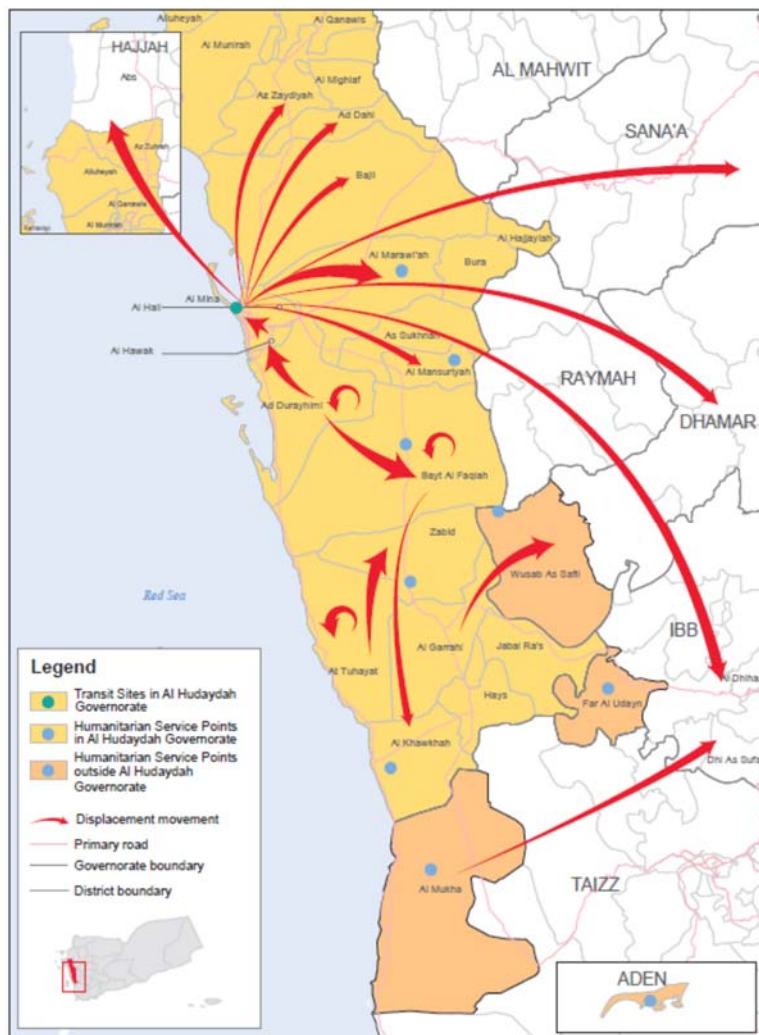
Internal Displacement

Conflict on the western coastal frontline including Taizz and al-Hudaydah, has and continues to result in significant new internal displacement. As at the beginning of June 2018, there were already more than 18,000 IDP households who had arrived in southern governorates, over 60% from al-Hudaydah, since the beginning of the year. The majority of these were displaced in the southern parts of al-Hudaydah (30%), Abyan (26%), Lahj (11%) and Shabwah (8%). Since June as the fighting reached Hudaydah city, thousands

of internally displaced (IDP) households having been displaced within al-Hudaydah, as well as to Ibb, Sana'a and Aden, with the numbers increasing daily. Together with other humanitarian response partners and in coordination with the Rapid Response Mechanism, Protection Cluster partners are working in humanitarian service points and transit sites to identify vulnerable and persons with specific needs and follow-up with emergency protection assistance and services.

Vulnerability and Persons with Specific Needs

Conflict, cholera and risk of famine, together with the effects of the closure of air, sea and land crossings, continue to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the population. In particular, women, children and persons with specific needs are at heightened risk from conflict and the consequent loss of heads of households, family separation and breakdown of community structures. The annual report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict was released for 2017, noting concern over the killing and maiming of 1,316 children, 51% of which were caused by airstrikes, and the remaining by shelling, shooting and explosive remnants of war. The highest number of child casualties was documented in Taizz, followed by Sa'ada. The report also noted with concern 842 cases of recruitment and use of boys as well as 20 verified attacks on schools.



Source: OCHA Yemen: Al Hudaydah Update, Situation Report No. 5

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

At the end of May, the frontlines in Al-Hudaydah moved rapidly from the south of the governorate to the edge of al-Hudaydah city, following swift movement through al-Tuhayat and Bayt al-Faqih before fierce fighting in ad-Durayhimi and on to the airport and al-Hudaydah city. As a result, the protection of civilians is being increasingly threatened in al-Hudaydah, by indiscriminate attacks as fighting spills over into urban areas. Almost fifty percent of civilian casualties to date in al-Hudaydah have occurred when people were in their own homes or farms, and twenty-five percent when they were in cars, buses or on the road, many of them trying to access services or find routes to safety. The eruption of ground fighting further into urban areas in al-Hudaydah would put the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians at risk, particularly where military operations occur in neighborhoods and buildings where civilians reside, or on busy road junctions or around vital services, putting the lives of civilians in harm's way.

Safe routes for civilians to leave conflict areas are not always available, due to airstrikes, armed groups, landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs), while humanitarian access remains challenging. Since May, dozens of civilians have been killed or injured in some 7 incidents where airstrikes hit civilian vehicles, including fleeing IDPs, and at least 4 incidents where their vehicles struck landmines. Other populations

have reported being trapped or inaccessible, while transport may be difficult or expensive for those attempting to flee violence, such as older persons or marginalized populations. Civilian infrastructure, upon which civilians are depending for survival, are at threat of damage or destruction. Hospitals, underground water pipes, schools and religious sites are already among those that have been damaged in the fighting. Meanwhile, children remain at heightened risk of injury during aerial bombardment, shelling, shooting and due to explosive remnants of war. Prevention of family separation is a priority along with women and girls, particularly female-headed households, who may be at risk of sexual harassment and violence, both during flight and where hosted in sub-standard living situations.

Sa'ada, despite not being an active front, remains one of the most heavily impacted governorates, with more than double the number of civilian impact incidents as al-Hudaydah in the first five months of the year. Significant areas of concern include civilians moving in rural areas, often in border districts, with 68 incidents according to the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, in which civilians were injured or killed by small arms fire, shelling and airstrikes while moving by feet, in addition to 27 incidents where civilian vehicles were targeted during movements, and 12 incidents in which civilians were killed or injured by UXOs. Infrastructure was also widely impacted with 42 incidents generating damage to infrastructure, in particular, main roads and fuel stations. On average, Sa'ada has witnessed damage to three water facilities, two schools and one hospital, each month in 2018.

In the South, fighting in al-Dhale'e and Lahj lessened but not yet leading to a return of IDPs. Other areas with continued fighting include al-Bayda, which has resulted in increased displacement within the governorate, as well as displacement from Taizz to areas such as Mawza, al-Mukha and Dhubab.

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:

- The Protection Cluster, as part of the overall humanitarian response and with the support of the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, is strengthening the preparedness of partners through strengthening community, coordination and emergency responder capacities in the most conflict-affected areas. First and second line strategic responses, focusing on community centers delivering essential protection services (including protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV)) and community-based protection, have also been developed for prioritization within the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan.
- The Child Protection Sub-Cluster conducted sessions on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for some 30 NGOs and government officials, aimed at ensuring compliancy to the 'no tolerance' principle for sexual exploitation and abuse among humanitarian workers. Sub-national clusters, with the support of Save the Children and Child and Youth Protection Organization (CYPO), also conducted trainings on child protection in emergencies, focusing on psychosocial support and preventing family separation, for 35 social workers from MOSAL and national NGOs in Sana'a and 25 in al-Hudaydah.

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

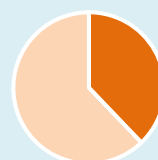
Strengthen the capacity of partners, service providers, civil society and authorities on protection

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

- In April and May, the GBV Sub-Cluster conducted training for 40 partners on Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE), focused on the GBV IASC guidelines, survivor-centered approaches, referral pathways and case management to promote an integrated and multi sectoral approach to GBV prevention and response. UNFPA also established two safe spaces for women in Marib and al-Jawf, to provide multi-sectoral support to GBV survivors, psychosocial support and recreational activities, in addition to awareness raising for women and adolescent girls.
- The Aden Sub-National Protection Cluster facilitated the first al-Mukalla Protection Working Group meeting with 22 participants from different national NGOs working to discuss current protection issues in Hadramaut and agree on capacity-building workshops and training. The Sub-National Protection Cluster also facilitated a training on conducting rapid protection assessments for 24 key partner staff. In coordination with the Child Protection Sub-Cluster and UNHCR, agreed on support to the civil registry authorities to expedite procedures to provide birth certificates and other vital documents.
- In March and April, OHCHR organized workshops with a special focus on the impact of the conflict on people with disabilities and on anti-discrimination. OHCHR also conducted trainings for the Yemen National Commission of Inquiry in Amman, Jordan and Beirut, Lebanon on the Protection of Human Rights and Rule of Law in the Context of Combating Terrorism as well as on investigation methodologies, as well as on administration and finance staff of the commission.
- In Taizz and southern governorates, INTERSOS conducted protection monitoring, reaching more than 3,000 persons and providing protection cash, psychosocial support and legal counseling to households in need. INTERSOS has also established six Women Community Centers to provide a safe environment for community members with protection concerns, especially women and girls. Social workers assist in case identification and referrals, while the centers also have breast-feeding corners, where a nurse provides awareness on Infant and young child feeding for pregnant and lactating women, in addition to awareness on complementary feeding. Awareness sessions on gender and protection related issues are also conducted, benefiting over 1.200 women and girls to date, in addition to a first round of life skills training conducted for 60 GBV survivors and women at risk.
- In Hajjah, Life Maker Meeting Place Organization (LMMPO) has formed two new community-based protection networks (CBPNs) in Khiran Muharraq and Mustaba districts, with training on protection concepts in emergencies, problem solving and conflict resolution, playing a role in resolving problems between IDPs and host communities through mediation. LMMPO also selected four locations for child-friendly spaces (CFSs) to provide psychosocial support and child protection services in cooperation with MOSAL, as well as to train mine risk awareness educators on raising community awareness. LMMPO will also provide legal support services to IDPs regarding civil documentation needed to facilitate their access to humanitarian services and assistance.
- Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) continues to coordinate with civil registration authorities and provide staffing support, having facilitated the process of obtaining birth certificates for 1,473 children to date. SDF has also established additional four offices to provide protection services, including legal counseling, psychosocial support, GBV multi-sectoral services and child protection. Through YEMAC, SDF have trained staff in Sana'a governorate to conduct awareness sessions, reaching 991 individuals with mine risk education.
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is conducting Information, Counseling and Legal Assistance (ICLA), funded by IOM, to support the provision of civil documentation and awareness raising sessions. NRC also began case referrals in Aden, Lahj and Taiz governorates.

KEY FIGURES

PEOPLE IN NEED	12.9 M
PEOPLE IN ACUTE NEED	6.5 M
IDPs	2.0 M
IDP RETURNEES	1.0 M
PERSONS TARGETED	5.0M
FUNDING REQUESTED	104.1M
FUNDING MET**	39.4M
UNMET NEEDS	64.7M



37.8%
FUNDED

*Figures based on FTS as of 28 May 2018

- In April, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) conducted rapid needs assessments in al-Mukha district in Taizz, providing protection cash assistance for the most vulnerable cases. In partnership with UNICEF, DRC established new CBPNs in Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Taizz, Al-Dhale'e and Shabwah.
- Funded by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, For All Foundation (FAF) is providing protection monitoring, legal assistance, psychosocial support and protection cash assistance in al-Dhale'e and Hadramaut.
- UNHCR is supporting seven IDP community centers in Amran, Amanat al-Asimah, Dhamar, Ibb, al-Hudaydah, Hajjah, Sa'ada and Al-Jawf, which aim at providing comprehensive protection services and assistance to IDPs and vulnerable host community members, including social counselling, psychosocial support, legal and cash assistance and make referrals to other service providers. Among 294 IDP households displaced from Al Jawf to Amran, an assessment found that 70% were living in abandoned houses, 5% in schools and 25% with host families, and families faced protection risks exacerbated by the lack of privacy, family separation, trauma, and lack of documents. UNHCR's partner in Amran provided the newly-displaced families with lifesaving assistance, which included shelter assistance and NFIs, as well as cash, documentation and psychosocial support.
- Family Counseling and Development Foundation (FCDF) is continuing to provide specialized psychosocial support through a toll-free helpline. FCDF also provides awareness activities in Amran, Sana'a, Aden and Taizz on mental health and psychosocial support, focusing on family and social problems, GBV, and the psychosocial effects of the conflict on the population. Completing a project in April 2018, 400 beneficiaries benefited from specialized mental health services in Sana'a, Aden, Hajjah, Taizz and Amran. In partnership with UNFPA, FCDF is currently establishing two centers in Sana'a and Aden to provide specialized psychosocial support to GBV survivors.
- SRA Foundation for Sustainable Foundation conducted a training course on combating violence against women and children and the roles of social workers in psychosocial support, targeting some 30 social workers and NGO staff in Amanat al-Asimah.

IN FOCUS: PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT BY AL-AMAN ORGANIZATION FOR BLIND WOMEN CARE

Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women Care (AOBWC) was established in Yemen in 1999 aiming for inclusion of blind women in society through educational, health, social and development services throughout the country. In response to the present humanitarian crisis, AOBWC is providing protection services for internally displaced persons in Ibb governorate, including community-based protection networks, cash assistance and psychosocial support to conflict-affected children and GBV survivors. In a recent story, a 36-year displaced woman from Al-Hudaydah was a victim of domestic violence and thrown out of her house time and time again. Suffering from family pressures and severe depression, she attempted suicide more than once, resulting in the community sending her to local mystics for treatment, resulting in even further marginalization. AOBWC responded to her needs with psychological support, which resulted in significant improvements in her mental and psychological situation. She also received cash assistance in order to build a small shelter, as well as livelihoods support to regain normalcy in her life and eliminate feelings of homelessness and fear, taking small steps to rebuild her life in peace.

Psychosocial support is a strategic activity of the Protection Cluster intended to address the severe, adverse effects on the physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of persons due to exposure to conflict, violence, family separation, lack of access to services, and other reasons.



Displaced children playing at hosting site. Credit: Al-Aman Organization

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