

3 August 2010

## YEMEN

# IDPs facing international neglect

Following intermittent clashes between Al-Houthi groups and the Yemeni government in July 2009, the situation in Sa'ada governorate escalated into open conflict in the sixth round of hostilities since 2004. Tens of thousands of people were displaced from Sa'ada and Amran governorates, adding to those displaced by previous rounds of fighting. For many, it was their second or third displacement over the last few years.

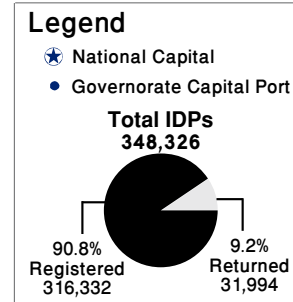
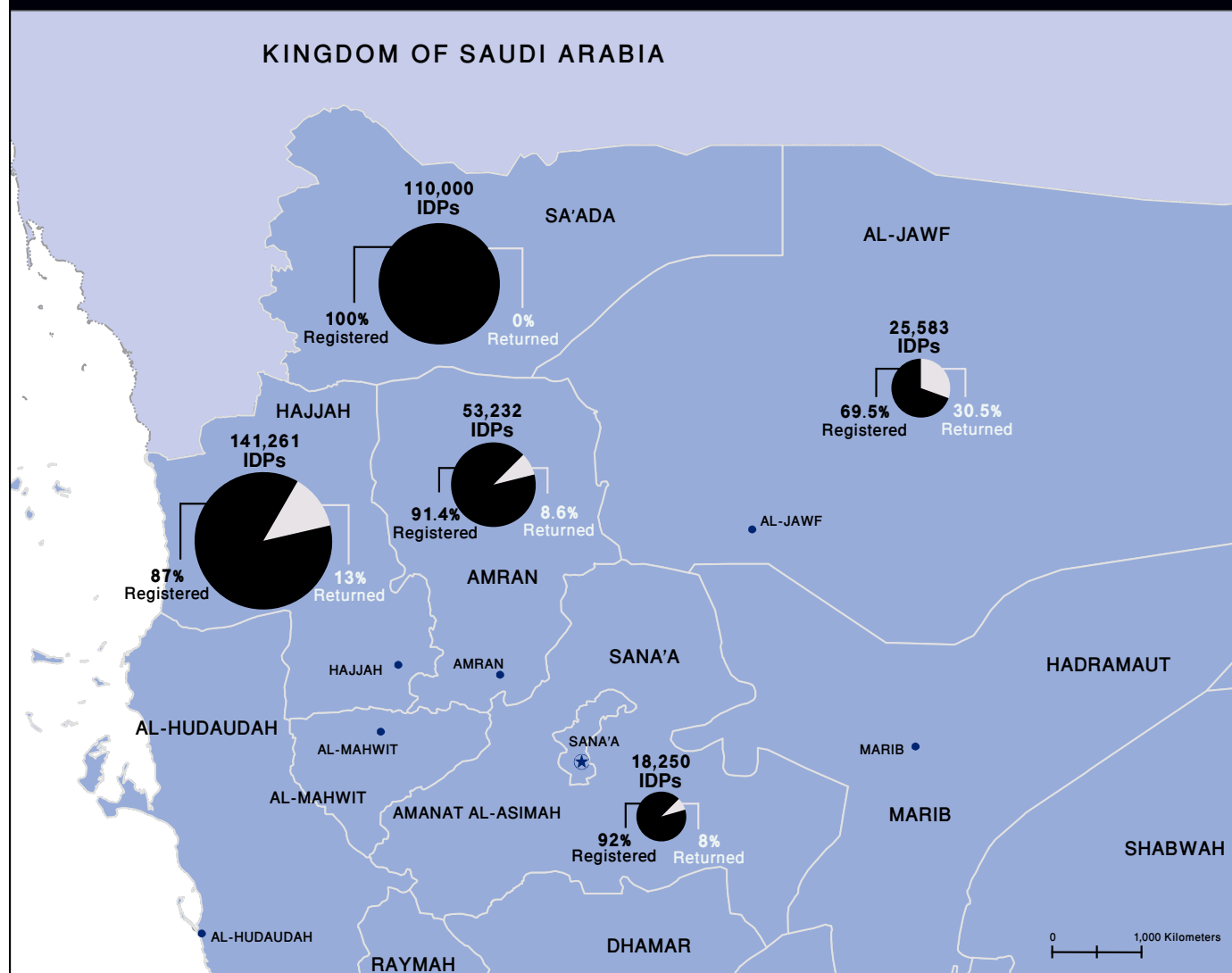
In February 2010 a ceasefire put an end to hostilities; however intermittent violence has continued in affected governorates. As of July, approximately 342,000 were registered as internally displaced people (IDPs), and more than 800,000 people had been indirectly affected by the conflict, including communities hosting IDPs and residents who had lost access to basic services. The governorates of Sa'ada, Amran, Hajjah and Al Jawf were particularly affected. Only about 15 per cent of IDPs were gathered in camps or identified informal settlements.

IDPs' returns have remained limited due to a wide range of protection and humanitarian concerns in their places of origin, as well as doubts over the durability of the ceasefire.

In the meantime, limited and inconsistent access continues to place obstacles on humanitarian activities, particularly those in favour of IDPs living in host communities and most IDPs in Sa'ada. The international community's limited response to appeals for funds is also having a severe impact on the provision of assistance to IDPs.

# Registered and Returned\* IDPs

As of 14 June 2010



\*Returns: the figures shown here are registered returnees and a number of IDPs that were absent during the verification exercise and therefore have been classified as returnees. Many people have not notified their departure from areas of displacement, therefore the total number of returnees is higher than represented in this map. The number of returnees is being monitored and will be updated accordingly. Humanitarian actors continue to assist IDPs in their areas of displacement, as well as returnees.



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The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on all maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
The data and information represented originates from UN country team as indicated.  
Creation date: 14 June 2010  
Map sources: Elevation data from SRTM, IDPs data from UNHCR and HCT data from MoH and CSO Yemen.  
United Nations  
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Regional Office for the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia

Source: UN OCHA

\* UN OCHA has since updated figures provided above, reporting 342,000 IDPs and 14,000 confirmed returnees as of July 2010.

More maps are available at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

## **Background: Fragile state, ongoing conflicts and natural disasters**

Yemen faces a number of severe economic and political challenges. In recent years Yemen has faced intermittent internal armed conflict in Sa'ada in the north, a growing southern separatist movement, and the resurgence of al-Qaida (USDoS, June 2010; Chatham House, January 2010). It is the poorest state in the Arab world, with high unemployment and an estimated 35 per cent of the population below the poverty line; it faces food insecurity, widespread water scarcity and depletion of its natural resources including oil (WB, April 2009). The country also hosts over 172,000 refugees (UNHCR, May 2010).

Several incidents of internal displacement have resulted from natural disasters as well as internal conflicts and disturbances. Recent natural disasters have included widespread flooding and slow-onset disasters such as drought and land erosion. Several thousand people were displaced in Al Mahwit governorate from 2007 by droughts, and in October 2008 flooding in the eastern governorates of Hadramout and Al-Mahara caused the displacement of between 20,000 and 25,000 people (WFP, December 2008; OCHA, November 2008 and December 2009).

### *Conflict in the south*

Until 1990, Yemen was divided into two states; the northern Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in the south (HRW, October 1994; USDoS, 2007). The two fought three short wars, in 1972, 1979 and 1988. In 1990, national reconciliation led to the unified Republic of Yemen with Sana'a as its capital, but differences were never resolved and civil war broke out in 1994. The 70-day war led to the displacement of 53,000 people, mainly from the governorates of Aden, Lahj, Taiz and Abyan, where most of the fighting took place (HRW, October 1994; UN SC, June and July 1994).

Tensions have since persisted, with southerners continuing to protest against political exclusion, harassment, and the presence of military camps and checkpoints (MERIP, July 2005). Numerous mass protests have taken place since 2006. There were mass demonstrations in 2009 in Lahj, Hadramout and Abyan, with protesters calling for secession (Al Jazeera, 20 May 2009; HRW, December 2009), and in May 2009 around 200 families were reportedly temporarily displaced in Lahj following violent clashes (IRIN, May 2009).

Protests since 2008 have been met, according to human rights organisations, with harsh repression, leading to further protests and increasing violence (IRIN, April 2010; HRW, December 2009). In 2010 there have been fierce clashes in Lahj and Dahl between the Yemeni army and militants linked to the separatist movement (SOHR, June 2010). Scores of houses were destroyed by military bombardments in the two governorates, and families in Lahj reportedly fled their homes amid fears of confrontation between the security forces and militants (Yemen Post, May and June 2010; AFP, June 2010). Southern human rights activists reported that several hundred people, if not more, were affected and possibly displaced in June due to clashes and government shelling in residential areas in Dahl (SOHR, June 2010).

### *Conflict in the north*

In the northern governorate of Sa'ada, a group referred to as "Al-Houthi" after the family name of the leader of the rebellion has since 2004 engaged in armed conflict with the Yemeni army and government-backed tribes (ICG, May 2009; RAND, May 2010). Husain Badr al-Din al-Houthi founded "Believing Youth" ("*al-shabab al-mu'min*") primarily to promote Zaydi religious education, but it developed into an opposition movement. The conflict began with isolated clashes in Sa'ada, but by February 2010 it had extended to the rest of the governorate, in addition to Amran, Hajjah, Sana'a, and Al Jawf governorates, and the province of Jizan in southern Saudi Arabia. As of June

2010, a considerable number of districts in Sa'ada remained under Al-Houthi control.

There have been six rounds of conflict, the latest continuing from August 2009 to February 2010. Earlier rounds were fought from June to September 2004; from March to April 2005; from July 2005 to February 2006; from January to June 2007; and from May to July 2008. The intensity of the conflict has increased with each round; in addition, the armed forces of Saudi Arabia have been involved in the latest round. The Yemeni and Saudi governments have used fighter jets, helicopters, tanks and artillery to attack Al-Houthi positions, mostly in rural areas but also in heavily-populated towns. Al-Houthi has also reportedly used heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns, and both sides have extensively used landmines (IRIN, July 2008 *and* April 2007; HRW, April 2010; RAND, May 2010). All parties to the conflict, including the Saudi armed forces, have been accused of possible violations of humanitarian and human rights law (HRW, November 2008 *and* April 2010; AI, April and December 2010), although access restrictions imposed by the Yemeni government have made it very difficult to confirm violations or report on the conflict.

Estimates of the number of casualties since 2005 have ranged widely (MERIP, July 2005; OCHA, July 2008; RAND, May 2010) and have arguably increased significantly in the latest conflict. The intensity and violence of the latest round of conflict has been unprecedented. Human rights organisations reported repeated instances of alleged violations perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including indiscriminate killing through aerial bombardments or shelling, use of civilians as "human shields", summary executions, looting of private property, a significant rise in arbitrary detention, and the recruitment of children (HRW April 2010; AI April 2010 *and* December 2009)

Local human rights groups have reported that thousands of people have been arrested, and that

more than a hundred have been victims of forced disappearance related to the Sa'ada conflict but also to counter-terrorism efforts and repression of social unrest in the south (IRIN, July 2008; HRW, October 2008, December 2009 *and* April 2010; USDoS, March 2010; YOHR, June 2010).

In February 2010, the government and Al-Houthi announced a ceasefire. The ceasefire agreement included six elements to put an end to hostilities, but it did not address the causes of the conflict (IRIN, February 2010). Fighting between Saudi and Al-Houthi forces had ceased shortly prior to the ceasefire, though Saudi Arabia has continued to maintain a ten- to 15-kilometre buffer zone along the Yemeni side of the border, in which villages have reportedly been razed and civilians displaced (Yemen Observer, May 2010; OCHA, December 2009).

Several months following the ceasefire, Sa'ada, Amran and Al Jawf governorates enjoyed relative security, but the peace remained fragile, with intermittent clashes, large areas of Sa'ada under Al-Houthi control, and checkpoints manned by all parties as well as local tribes (RAND, May 2010; IRIN, June 2010; OCHA, June 2010). On 21 June, the Yemeni government and al Houthi signed a reconciliation agreement to reinforce the ceasefire agreement as well as encourage internally displaced people (IDPs) to return to their homes (IRIN, July 2010; Yemen Post, June 2010; Shabwa, July 2010). Intermittent clashes have nevertheless continued particularly in Harf Soufiyan which witnessed in July some of the deadliest clashes since the ceasefire (Al Jazeera, July 2010; IRIN July 2010).

## Profile and geographical distribution of IDPs

Estimates of the number of people displaced by the Sa'ada conflict have varied due to difficulties in access and the different operational definitions used. There are no clear figures available

on the number of IDPs from the first four rounds of conflict from 2004 to 2007; estimates ranged from 20,000 to 50,000 people displaced. In late 2008, during the height of the fifth round, the UN estimated that 120,000 to 130,000 people were displaced. However, even following the end of those hostilities, restrictions in access meant the figures could not be verified, and the UN agreed an operational figure of 100,000 IDPs in February 2009.

Intermittent fighting in the first half of 2009 caused thousands more people to flee towards Sa'ada city and Mahaleet in southern Sa'ada (IDMC interview, May 2009; IRIN, June 2009).

When full-scale hostilities resumed in August 2009, thousands of people fled towards Sa'ada city, Baqim district in northern Sa'ada, and further south to Hajjah, Amran, Al Jawf and Sana'a governorates. IDPs attempting to flee to Saudi Arabia were prevented from crossing the border and those who crossed were subject to refoulement back to Yemen (OCHA, December 2009).

As of July 2010, around 342,000 IDPs (of which 28,000 are possible returnees) had been registered by UNHCR in cooperation with the Yemeni government (OCHA, July 2010). Around 49,000 of them, or 15 per cent, were in seven formal camps (of which four were in Sa'ada city; one camp in Khaiwan, Amran; and three camps in Mazrak, Hajjah) and eight informal settlements (including seven settlements in Sa'ada and one in al Jawf). The remaining 85 per cent of the displaced population were sheltering among host communities, renting apartments or squatting in makeshift shelters, mosques, or open spaces in rural and urban areas in Sa'ada, Hajjah, Al Jawf, Amran, and Sana'a.

Internal displacement has also been reported in the province of Jizan in Saudi Arabia, though no clear figures are available. Local Saudi authorities reported that approximately 1,300 families had been moved to government-provided housing due to the fighting (Gulf Daily News, November 2009).

The conflict over the last several years has principally caused the displacement of poor rural farming communities, though it has also affected civilians from urban areas in Sa'ada and Amran. In addition, members of public institutions have been displaced from Houthi-controlled areas on the basis of their allegiance to the state; and others due to their membership to tribes or clans that have assisted the government. Nonetheless, registration has not led to a reliable profile of IDPs in Yemen, and access difficulties have prevented comprehensive assessment of the needs of the conflict-affected civilians including IDPs. In response, a UNHCR-led IDP profiling exercise in collaboration with the government is to be initiated in July 2010, and completed by the end of the year.

Many IDPs have been displaced two or three times over the last few years and their needs are extensive. It is estimated that more than 85 per cent are women or children (UNHCR, May 2010). The majority of IDPs in the north are from the Shi'ia majority, but members of the Sunni population have also been displaced, as well as a small Jewish community of 65 people which the government resettled to Sana'a in January 2007 (Yemen Times, February 2009 and April 2009).

## Protection of IDPs

Few UN agencies or other agencies have publicly advocated or reported on protection issues so as not to further reduce the access which the government permits them. Lack of access to conflict areas has also prevented reliable reporting on protection of civilians or the magnitude of the displacement. In areas of displacement which humanitarian agencies have been able to access, protection monitoring has been limited by a lack of resources.

### *Physical security and integrity*

The majority of IDPs fled their areas of origin due to heavy fighting, forced recruitment and abduc-

tions, including of children. On many occasions, IDPs found themselves in the cross-fire between parties to the conflict. From August to December 2009, several IDP camps in Sa'ada were inaccessible or temporarily closed due to insecurity or attacks against the camps. In September 2009, an airstrike on an informal settlement in Adi near Harf Sufiyan in Amran governorate killed 85 IDPs. Fighting and checkpoints limited movement, and prevented civilians from fleeing conflict areas or seeking humanitarian assistance (HRW, April 2010; USDoS, March 2010). People who did flee faced risks including exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), arbitrary arrest, confiscation of personal identification documents, looting of personal property and the separation of their families.

Intermittent violence in Sa'ada, Amran and Al Jawf governorates has continued to put people at risk (OCHA, June and July 2010). Clashes in June 2010 in Harf Sufiyan caused minor displacement (IRIN June, 2010; OCHA, June 2010). Restrictions on freedom of movement were still evident with checkpoints continuing on main roads, and mines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) were widespread. Since February, 52 people including IDPs and returnees in places of return had been reported killed or injured by mines or other UXO (OCHA, June 2010; Seyaj, March 2010).

Children, displaced or not, have been particularly affected. The UN has estimated that 71 per cent of children recorded killed or injured died as a result of direct shelling on civilian targets, while 29 per cent died because they had no access to humanitarian aid. Child recruitment has also been pervasive, with as many as half of the total number of fighters from both Al-Houthi and the tribes affiliated with the government below 18 years of age (UN RSG on Children in Armed Conflict, April 2010; IRIN, January 2009; Child Soldiers, December 2008; Al Hewar, July 2008). Children continue to be killed or injured by mines (Seyaj, March 2010); and reports of child recruitment in Al-Houthi-controlled areas have continued (IRIN, May 2010). Exposure to

violence has led to high rates of trauma and anxiety among women and children (IRIN, February 2008 and February 2010; IDMC interview, May 2009 and March 2010). There is no clear information on their levels of exposure to SGBV.

#### *Accessing basic necessities*

Restrictions in movements and insecurity have repeatedly prevented assistance reaching displaced communities in conflict areas in Sa'ada and places of displacement, particularly host communities. Only in the three camps in Harradh did humanitarian agencies have uninterrupted access (HRW, April 2010). Though the situation in these camps was at first poor owing to operational difficulties and limited capacity to respond to fast-emerging needs, provision of shelter, health facilities, education and community services did later adhere to recognised standards (IRIN, May 2010).

For the majority of IDPs, particularly those in host communities, restrictions and limited capacity have meant that assistance has generally been confined to food and non-food items such as plastic sheetings, tents, and hygiene items. In Sa'ada, camps and settlements have at times been completely inaccessible during the conflict, and so displaced residents' access to basic services has been very limited. Certain parts of Amran, particularly Khaiwan camp, and of Al Jawf have been often inaccessible due to conflict and tribal disputes, and humanitarian agencies have also faced hijackings or diversion of assistance (IRIN, April 2010).

In December 2009, assessment in Hajjah and Amran revealed IDPs living in open shelters, schools and clinics or in overcrowded housing – sometimes up to five families in one home – with limited access to services or assistance. The assessments underlined the particular exposure of vulnerable groups including single mothers and girls, and people with disabilities. The assessments also highlighted the limited access to education and health care services, and notable incidents of conflict between IDPs and host communities, par-



ticularly in Amran, over limited resources (CARE/OCHA, December 2009).

The vulnerability of families has further increased as their displacement has become increasingly protracted and their limited coping mechanisms exhausted. Recent assessments have identified food, water, shelter and basic medical services as major outstanding needs while host communities' limited resources have been overstretched (WFP, May 2010; OCHA, June and July 2010; ICRC, May 2010). The World Food Programme (WFP) has reported a marked deterioration in food security as IDPs' coping strategies have been exhausted, food distributions delayed, and rations reduced (WFP, June 2010).

Lack of funding forced food rations to be halved in May 2010 to allow for some minimal provision of assistance. The impact of these food cuts is likely to be severe, and demonstrations by IDPs as witnessed in April and May in Sa'ada and Hajjah have raised concern of instability increasing if rations are further reduced (WFP, June 2010; OCHA June 2010).

Access to health care continues to be limited. While agencies reach all IDPs in camps, only 20 per cent of those outside camps have access, causing an increase in mortality and morbidity rates among IDPs (OCHA, June 2010). The low coverage is due to limited funding, the scattering of people over wide areas, and the weak health care infrastructure (OCHA, June 2010).

#### *Livelihoods*

The prolonged displacement has aggravated the poverty of many IDPs in Sa'ada, Amran, Al Jawf, and Sana'a, where income and savings are being exhausted (UN RSG on IDPs, April 2010; IRIN, February and May 2010; IDMC Interview, May 2009; and June 2010). Many rely on scarce daily labour, while access to land for agricultural or pastoral activities continues to be limited. The sale of assets including jewelry and livestock has been a

major coping strategy (IDMC, Interview May 2009; CARE/OCHA, December 2009). IDPs have also reportedly face discrimination and tensions with host communities, in Amran particularly but also in Sana'a and elsewhere, in access to basic services, employment, education, and shelter (Yemen Times, June 2008; News Yemen, April 2010).

#### *Internally displaced children*

Access to education, especially for up to 55,000 internally displaced children, continues to be very limited and in many cases denied (OCHA, June 2010). Many children have reportedly missed up to two years of school. Obstacles to education have included the lack of financial means or necessary documentation, and overcrowding and the lack of resources where children are registered in host schools (IRIN, February, March and May 2010; IDMC interview, May 2009; OCHA June 2010).

Many internally displaced children in vulnerable households have worked to complement family income, for example by begging, smuggling, or collecting refuse. The prevalence of child labour is likely to rise as IDPs' coping strategies dry up (OCHA December 2009; IDMC interview, June 2010). The vulnerability and poverty experienced by displaced families has raised concerns of child trafficking and early marriages, though information on the situation is lacking (IRIN, June and July 2010; USDoS, June 2010).

## **Durable solutions**

The February 2010 ceasefire led to some spontaneous returns. However a UNHCR survey following the ceasefire revealed that 61 per cent of IDPs did not intend to return immediately, and four months later, only an estimated 28,000 IDPs, or ten per cent of those registered, were thought to have returned to places of origin (OCHA, June and July 2010; UNHCR, February 2010). Government officials and some humanitarian actors have however suggested that the number of returnees

might be far higher than reported (IDMC interview, June 2010): a government report published in May 2010 suggested that 90,000 IDPs had returned (WFP, May 2010).

Obstacles to return have included insecurity and the risk of renewed fighting; the extensive presence of land mines; the damage to or destruction of property including farms and homes; the fear of arrest, detention, reprisals and forced recruitment, particularly by Al-Houthi in Sa'ada; and food insecurity and the lack of livelihoods given the limited access to external assistance (UNHCR, February 2010; IRIN, March and April 2010; UN RSG on IDPs, April 2010; ICRC, May 2010). This suggests a protracted period of displacement is likely for many IDPs, and underlines the message of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights of IDPs (the RSG on IDPs) during a mission to Yemen in April 2010 that a significant percentage may require alternative settlement options such as integration or resettlement (UN RSG on IDPs, April 2010).

There is little information available on the situation in conflict-affected areas or that of returnees. The level of destruction throughout the affected areas is estimated to be far more comprehensive than in previous rounds of fighting. In April 2009, the Sa'ada Fund for Reconstruction (SFR), a government body, had reported that over 8,000 houses, 1,400 farms, almost 300 mosques, and over 100 schools were damaged or destroyed in April 2009; and though it recently identified over 6,500 houses and farms in need of reconstruction in Sa'ada and Harf Sufiyan, it has yet to provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the latest round of conflict (SFR GoY, April 2009; Yemen Times, April 2010; Saba News, June 2010; IRIN, March 2010).

From reports available the level of destruction and corresponding humanitarian needs are extensive (OCHA, July 2010; WFP July 2010). In early 2010, 70 per cent of health care facilities in Sa'ada were

reportedly either destroyed or used as military installations, while an estimated 220 of the 725 schools in the governorate had been destroyed, damaged or looted (IRIN, March 2010; UN RSG, April 2010). In the accessible areas, observers have noted extensive damage to infrastructure, a high percentage of houses destroyed or damaged, a prevalence of mines and other UXO, continued occupation of schools and clinics by Al-Houthi, and checkpoints including many manned by children (IDMC interview, June 2010). Returnees reportedly live in makeshift shelters or damaged homes and access to basic services is very limited.

## Access of humanitarian agencies

Humanitarian agencies have faced a range of challenges in gaining access to IDPs and other civilians. Most humanitarian agencies first began working in Sa'ada after the end of the fourth round of conflict in 2007 (HRW, November 2008). Few organisations maintained a presence during successive rounds (MSF, June 2008; ICRC, August 2008). Access was restricted in the fourth and fifth rounds, and between rounds of fighting agencies also found it impossible to access most of Saa'da governorate, as well as Harf Sufiyan in Amran and Bani Houshesh in Sana'a (HRW, November 2008).

With the resumption of hostilities in August 2009, large areas of Sa'ada were inaccessible to humanitarian agencies as well as certain areas in Hajjah, Amran, and Al Jawf, due to insecurity, government restrictions, and checkpoints by all parties to the conflict (HRW, April 2010; News Yemen, September 2009; IRIN, January 2010). UN security procedures and that of several international NGOs also placed constraints on movements to conflict affected areas. Humanitarian agencies were however gradually able to widen their access to provide food and non-food assistance, though access to the vast majority of IDPs outside the camps was sporadic or limited in scope. As of February 2010, the government was allowing distribution of food



and non-food items, but still refusing to allow agencies to provide shelter to IDPs outside camps (HRW, April 2010).

In late March 2010, the UN, NGOs and government officials undertook a first brief visit to Sa'ada city to assess the situation and reopen UN offices shut since last September (UN News, March 2010). However, as of June, insecurity and restrictions have limited subsequent inter-agency missions to assess the situation there, and agencies still have difficulty obtaining permission to access areas beyond five to seven kilometres from Sa'ada city (IDMC interview, June 2010).

National and international humanitarian agencies have faced security incidents including diversion and targeting of convoys, hijacking of vehicles, and kidnappings (HRW, November 2008; ICRC, March 2007 and May 2007; IRIN, June 2009 and April 2010). In June 2009, after a series of kidnappings, three humanitarian workers were found killed (IRIN, June 2009) and several were still missing as of June 2010.

## National and international responses

From the start of the sixth conflict, the Government took a number of positive steps in recognising and addressing the situation of displacement, including the establishment of institutions to facilitate humanitarian exchange and coordination. This saw the establishment in August 2009 of the High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee for Relief Operations, headed by the Minister of Health, and complemented by the Executive Unit for IDPs at the operational level. Other government ministries and institutions such as the Social Fund have continued to address displacement issues within their respective mandates. The government has also taken a significant lead in IDP registration with the support of UNHCR.

The government has allowed humanitarian agencies wider access in some areas in Sa'ada, Amran, Hajjah, Al Jawf, and Sana'a, though access has remained sporadic and restricted. It hosted in April 2010 the RSG on IDPs to assess the situation and recommend steps forward. Though it declared an end to the registration process of IDPs as of late March, the government has also sought the assistance of humanitarian agencies to verify the situation of registered IDPs in all governorates, and appears to have heeded calls on the principle of voluntary returns and for the need of a national strategy to respond to the situation of displacement (IRIN, April 2010; UN News, April 2010).

The government has also recently taken steps to reinforce the ceasefire in a reconciliation agreement signed in June 2010 which, while attempting to stem intermittent violence, calls upon Al-Houthi to facilitate returns of IDPs (IRIN, July 2010). The agreement comes against the backdrop of the SFR resuming its activities to assess and allocate reconstruction funds in affected areas. The SFR has an estimated budget of \$69 million for reconstruction efforts in Sa'ada and Harf Sufiyan (Yemen Times, April 2010; Saba News, June 2010).

National agencies have responded, including the Yemeni Red Crescent Society, the Charitable Society for Social Welfare, Amel Association, Seyaj, and Sa'ada Women Charitable Association. These have generally benefited from wider access than UN agencies, albeit still restricted, and have played essential roles in the provision of humanitarian assistance. IDPs and national media have however reported that assistance has sometimes depended on tribal affiliation or imputed political opinion, and have questioned the neutrality of the Yemeni Red Crescent Society, which is closely associated with the government, in providing assistance (News Yemen, April 2009 and April 2010; Al Ishtiraqi, May 2008; Yemen Times, June 2008; IRIN, September 2008).

Following the start of the sixth war, the UN activated the inter-agency cluster approach, facilitating coordination between humanitarian agencies. For the first time, successive appeals were launched to address humanitarian needs in Sa'ada. A flash appeal launched in August 2009 and revised in December 2009 requested \$23 million. In December 2009, the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan for 2010 sought \$177 million to provide life-saving and early recovery assistance to some 1.4 million food-insecure people, including 200,000 IDPs from the conflict in Sa'ada (OCHA, November 2010). The YHRP was less than 32 per cent funded as of July 2010 (OCHA, July 2010). The shortfall has led to substantial gaps in assistance.

Humanitarian agencies have worked with government ministries to provide food, non-food items, temporary shelter, water and sanitation, psychosocial support, education and medical assistance to IDPs, returnees and war-affected communities where accessible (WFP, June 2010; ICRC, April 2010; UNHCR, June 2010; MSF October 2009). Though the cluster system has facilitated the response, there have been persistent difficulties in terms of information exchange, lack of capacity and resources. Though agencies have generally avoided addressing highly sensitive issues which may put at risk their already limited access, they have more forcefully and publicly highlighted the humanitarian needs of IDPs, and called for wider access. In addition to several UN agencies including UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), and UNICEF, international agencies present include Islamic Relief, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the International Committee of the Red Cross / Red Crescent (ICRC).

The displacement situation in Yemen has been met with broad neglect by the wider international community. This is despite the intensity and humanitarian impact of the conflict, which have increased significantly with Saudi Arabia's formal military involvement. Though the international community has viewed with concern the situation

in Sa'ada and encouraged the Yemeni government to respond to humanitarian needs, its priority has been to maintain the government's fragile political grip in the context of counter-terrorism. An international conference on Yemen held in London in January 2010 did very little to address the humanitarian situation in the north (Reuters, June 2010; UNHCR, February 2010).

In February 2010, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator classified the humanitarian situation in northern Yemen as an "underfunded emergency" requiring emergency UN funding, and reiterated earlier calls for international funding (OCHA, February and July 2010). However, governments have argued that adequate reconciliation is needed to ensure that the war will not resume, and that aid should be linked to broader objectives of political and economic reform. However the humanitarian community has warned that inadequate funding of life-saving activities is likely to cause a grave humanitarian crisis and could trigger further instability (UN News, April 2010; WFP, June 2010).

**Note:** This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Yemen. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people.

In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

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