

# Yemen

23 April 2020

UNHCR urgently seeks **USD 89.4 million** to provide life-saving protection and assistance to internally displaced families, refugees and asylum-seekers and the communities hosting them in Yemen.

UNHCR’s 2020 financial requirements are **USD 211.9 million** for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum-seekers in Yemen. As of 14 April, only **USD 58.4 million** has been received, **28 per cent** of the total requirements.

The USD 89.4 million outlined below represent funds required by May for the continuation of humanitarian and protection programmes in Yemen, within UNHCR’s overall unfunded requirements in 2020.


This is now urgent, without the required funds, reduction or closure of programmes will have an immediate impact on the lives of 655,000 IDPs<sup>1</sup> and 281,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, across the country.


## Key Figures

 **24.1 million**  
people in need


 **15 million**  
people in acute need

 **4 million**  
displaced since March 2015

 **80%**  
have been displaced for more than a year

 **1.28 million**  
IDP returnees

 **269,388**  
refugees

 **10,811**  
asylum-seekers

## Summary of Urgent Funding Needs

	Activity	Requested amount (USD)
IDPs in Yemen	Basic relief items provided	16,626,812
	Community, infrastructure and services projects implemented	13,109,720
	Protection services provided (including cash and legal support)	23,173,057
	Shelter assistance provided	18,954,724
	Basic relief items provided	882,275
	Refugees and asylum-seekers in Yemen	Community, infrastructure and services projects implemented
Protection services provided (including cash and legal support)		12,095,660
Shelter assistance provided		1,002,454
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>89,390,372</b>

<sup>1</sup> The estimated number of IDPs to be supported in May and June with cash-based interventions, delivery of core relief items, emergency and transitional shelters, in addition to regular protection services. The figure excludes 110,000 persons of concern to be assessed during the period of May and June.

## Operational Context

The war in Yemen has entered its sixth year and has been described as the ‘World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis’ for the third year in a row. While 80 per cent (over 24 million) of Yemen’s population needs humanitarian assistance, some four million IDPs, 1.28 million IDP returnees, and 281,000 refugees and asylum-seekers are now reliant on humanitarian aid to survive. Yemen’s economy has contracted by almost 50 per cent and is on the brink of collapse. Only half of the country’s health facilities remain operational, more than a quarter of children are currently out of school, and over 80 per cent of the population now live below the poverty line. Without support, a growing number of families have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms such as begging, child labour and early marriage.

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### Current Challenges

#### **Ongoing conflict**

Current fighting in Al Jawf and neighbouring areas has displaced at least 60,000 individuals since January this year, threatening prospects of peace. A negotiated political settlement is the only way to a comprehensive and sustainable resolution of the conflict.

#### **Restricted humanitarian access**

While the operating environment in Yemen is full of challenges, including prevailing insecurity and limited access by the authorities, UNHCR has been able to stay and deliver protection and assistance.

#### **Heavy rains and flooding**

As the country has entered its rainy season, Aden has already been affected by heavy rains and flash flooding, to which UNHCR and partners are conducting rapid assessments and mobilizing assistance.

#### **COVID-19**

On 10 April, the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in Yemen. Given the already precarious situation across Yemen and the dire living and sanitary conditions, displaced people and the communities hosting them are at heightened risk. The critical needs outlined herein reflect UNHCR’s regular programming, with strong links to the COVID-19 response.

## UNHCR Response

### Refugees

UNHCR is the **lead agency** for ensuring the protection and well-being of **281,000 refugees and asylum-seekers** across Yemen, mainly from Somalia (96 per cent) and Ethiopia. Refugees are registered and provided with documentation, assistance and referrals to other services, including health and cash assistance to meet their basic needs.

### IDPs

Country-wide, UNHCR addresses the immediate needs of vulnerable **internally displaced families** by providing basic household items, shelter options, and cash assistance to help families pay their rent, purchase additional clothes for winter and access protection services, such as legal counselling. UNHCR encourages social cohesion between displaced populations and the communities hosting them, by implementing community projects and improving services on sites hosting IDPs.

## COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

### COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan

As needs related to Yemen's COVID-19 response continue to grow, additional funding requirements are being prepared for the next iteration of the [COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#)

(GHRP) and UNHCR's aligned [Coronavirus Emergency Appeal](#). Activities included within the revised GHRP will be focussed on COVID-19 response and preparedness, and will be additional to the Critical Needs outlined herein.

While maintaining its critical and life-saving programmes, UNHCR is fine-tuning its regular programming in light of the new operational context, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to bolster individuals and communities' resilience in the event of a potential of a COVID-19 outbreak.

A potential outbreak is likely to worsen vulnerabilities faced by refugees and asylum-seekers, including rising discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion. Maintaining regular programming, such as shelter rehabilitation and access to electricity and sewage systems, provision of hygiene items, and health programmes will ensure that overall living conditions and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers remain adequate. Due to loss of livelihoods linked to COVID-19, UNHCR is expanding its vulnerability criteria for cash assistance, to mitigate the socio-economic impacts felt by people of

concern. The additional cash will act as a lifeline for many households, particularly at a time when local communities' hosting capacities have stretched beyond limits.

For the IDP response, coordination and management of 1,650 hosting sites where some one million IDPs are living as a last resort, has become ever more critical. Those who live in the open or in unfinished buildings are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. Improving living conditions through access to WASH, provision of shelter, hygiene and other basic relief items for IDPs and surrounding host communities is a critical preventative measure in the fight against COVID-19 in Yemen.

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## Consequences of Underfunding

### Refugee Programme

If funds are not received by the end of May, 281,000 refugees and asylum-seekers will no longer have access to basic services (education, health, food, WASH, and shelter) or protection services including registration/documentation and specialized services for children. Without funding, more than 55,000 individuals (11,000 refugee families), particularly in the context of loss of livelihoods opportunities, will not receive monthly cash grants to cover their basic needs.

### IDP Programme

#### Site Coordination & Management

If funds are not received by early May, the living conditions in 1,000 of the most critically affected IDP hosting sites will remain well below minimum standards. At least 360,000 IDPs will not have access to adequate services (shelter, hygiene and WASH), increasing their risks of contracting communicable diseases and being impacted by inter-community tensions.

#### Shelter and Non-Food Items

If funds not received by early May, vulnerable IDPs will no longer receive rental subsidies, emergency shelter kits or other durable shelter solutions. Without funding, some 655,000 IDPs will not receive basic shelter for themselves and their families in the early days of displacement, heightening the risk of violence against women and children and the reliance on harmful coping mechanisms.

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### Protection

If funds not received by early May, protection services for the most vulnerable IDPs will have to stop, significantly increasing the risks of survival sex, forced/early marriages, and arbitrary arrests and detention, to name but a few. The funding would have enabled some 354,000 women and children to obtain documentation and IDs and be referred to medical or psychosocial support, reducing their exposure to exploitation, violence and human rights abuses and enabling them to mitigate the impacts of these.

## Coordination

UNHCR leads the **Protection, Shelter/Non-Food Items (S/NFI), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters** for IDPs and co-leads with IOM the **Refugee and Migrants Multi-Sector** for refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR also ensures that humanitarian interventions contribute to the overall development of the country.



52-year-old Shaker Ali sits in front of what used to be a marketplace in Aden. "I have lived here for more than 15 years, and seeing my neighborhood like this upsets me and makes me sad. The war forced us to leave and move." Mr. Shaker says. Photo by UNHCR/Saleh Bahulais

## Donors

**Total recorded contributions for the Yemen operation in 2020 amount to USD 58.4 million**

**UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided to this operation by:** Thani Bin Abdullah Bin Thani Al-Thani Humanitarian Fund | United States of America | Country-Based Pooled Funds | United Kingdom | Japan | Switzerland | Kuwait Society for Relief | Canada | Miscellaneous Private Donors

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