

YEMEN

1 – 10 December 2017

KEY FIGURES

20.7 million
people in need

2,014,026
Internally Displaced Persons
(IDPs)

89 per cent of IDPs
displaced for more than a
year

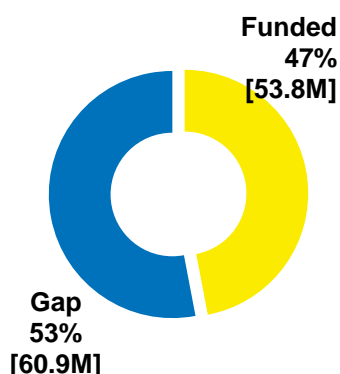
956,076 IDP returnees

1,015,375 recipients of
CRIs since March 2015

280,539 refugees and
asylum seekers

Funding

USD **114.6 M**
requested in 2017



Operational Update

UNHCR is alarmed that recent clashes in Sana'a have yet again placed civilians directly in harm's way. The eruption of hostilities on the streets of the capital coupled with aerial bombardment forced families to seek shelter in their homes in fear. The U.N Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, citing ICRC figures, has reported that at least 230 individuals have been killed and over 480 injured in Sana'a and northern governorates as a result of fighting. Among those affected include persons of concern to UNHCR, with two Somali adults impacted. Caught in the cross fire, one refugee has passed away, while another remains in a critical condition. Stray bullets also prematurely ended the life of a 14-year old Somali child and injured another 11-year old child. UNHCR is following up with the families of the deceased and injured to support them at this difficult time. On top of a direct risk to life, thousands of people remained in their homes this week, without safe access to water, food, medical assistance and fuel. In addition to the current crisis, a blockade on both commercial and humanitarian goods reaching Yemen remains in place, pushing families closer to the brink. The blockade, which has yet to be eased, has resulted in scarcity and subsequent increases in the price of fuel, water and essential commodities, including food and much needed medicines.

Further evidence of the increasing vulnerability of the Yemeni population was illustrated this week, with the release of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for 2018. Needs across Yemen remain overwhelming, with an estimated 22.2 million people requiring some form of humanitarian or protection assistance, including 11.3 million who are in acute need, representing a worrying increase of more than one million people since June 2017. Some 8.4 million are just one step away from starvation. These figures do not include additional needs that have arisen as a result of the past month of blockade or the recent escalation of hostilities.



Civilians, including children continue to bear the brunt of hostilities in Yemen's war.
Photo: UNHCR / S. Mantoo

IDP Response

The impact of the fierce clashes in Sana'a and neighbouring governorates was heavily felt by the wider humanitarian response, with operations grinding to a halt this week. Widespread insecurity forced the UN, including UNHCR staff, to work from home, with movement severely restricted and missions suspended. Many UN national staff were stranded in conflict areas within the capital and unable to move to safer locations, which affected relief efforts. Humanitarian teams in the south are also facing challenges, with long waits for fuel impacting movement.

UNHCR outreach and services for affected communities was also impacted considerably. The financial assistance programme, including a plan to assist over 17,000 vulnerable IDP families with winter assistance grants, has been postponed for the time being. Partners are facing difficulties in releasing the funds to financial services providers, many of which were closed or impacted by the recent fighting, further limiting UNHCR's ability to disburse cash grants. The Agency is working with partners to respond to vulnerable families as a matter of urgency, and to seek ways to distribute financial support as the cost of living, in particular on essential household items such as fuel, water and food increases with the border restrictions.

In addition to the current crisis, the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) imposed blockade continues to remain in effect, restricting access for both commercial and humanitarian goods to the country. The availability of fuel and its increasing price will remain important factors to ensure the 'bloodline' of UNHCR programs can continue. Fuel scarcity has also led to a dramatic increase in logistical costs, including transport to warehousing and distribution points. Despite Saudi Arabia's announcement on 22 November to ease the air, sea and land blockade of Yemen, specifically on humanitarian imports, the reopening of the strategic northern Hudaydah port to receive commercial, emergency and humanitarian supplies, has yet to take place. UNHCR reiterates that the overwhelming needs of the Yemeni population can only be addressed through the easing and full resumption of both humanitarian and commercial activities.

Refugee Response

UNHCR and IOM continue to work closely to facilitate the planned departure of Somali refugees as part of the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme. The closure of Aden port since the blockade started has led to the cancellation of three boat departures thus far, however, after weeks of delay, a boat carrying 108 passengers was able to safely depart Yemen for Somalia on the night of 10 December. Overall, counselling at two helpdesks has reached close to 2,500 people, sharing valuable information on assistance packages, transport and support in return locations. So far, 418 individuals have safely arrived to Somalia, with another 150 refugees fully documented and awaiting the fifth ASR departure.

Despite the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, new arrivals continue to arrive on Yemen's shores, some in search of international protection. During a four-day period, UNHCR in Aden registered 71 Ethiopian people, who had newly arrived to the country. This marks an increase in arrivals from Ethiopia for three weeks in a row. New arrivals reported high unemployment rates, drought and poverty in addition to concerns over their protection as reasons for leaving Ethiopia. By the end of this year, some 100,000 individuals are expected to have arrived to Yemen since the beginning of 2017, the vast majority of whom from the Horn of Africa. Despite the Agency's reduced operational role in the area of mixed migration, UNHCR will nevertheless continue to work with partners to assist individuals seeking international protection.

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