

YEMEN

3 – 9 November 2017

KEY FIGURES

20.7 million
people in need

2,014,026
Internally Displaced Persons
(IDPs)

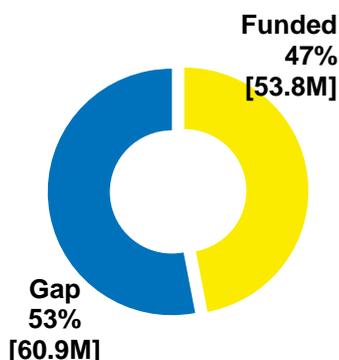
89 per cent of IDPs
displaced for more than a
year

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

The crisis in Yemen escalated to breaking point this week as hostilities ramped up, placing millions of civilians under further duress and hardship. A threat of famine looms as all Yemeni airports, seaports and land crossings have been prohibited from operating, bringing the heavily import-reliant country to its knees, preventing critical humanitarian aid deliveries, including medicine and food, along with commercial supplies from reaching the country. Almost 21 million people are now in need of humanitarian aid because of conflict, representing 76 per cent of the entire population, seven million of whom are facing famine-like conditions and rely completely on aid to survive.

The disruption in humanitarian assistance is placing Yemen's over two million displaced at heightened risk. According to the latest population movement tracking information, close to 90 per cent of IDPs have been displaced for a year or more, their savings long exhausted. The price of household essential items have soared this week, including a reported 60 per cent increase in fuel, critical for heating, electricity, transport and cooking as winter approaches. The UNHCR supply pipeline of aid for vulnerable families, including emergency shelter kits and core relief items (CRIs), has also been disrupted.

UNHCR and the wider humanitarian community reiterate that unhindered humanitarian access is essential to ensuring life-saving assistance is delivered and activities are conducted for those who need it most, in particular families in frontlines areas. The resumption of all humanitarian flights to support relief efforts must take place to ensure the United Nations and other aid organisations can continue their vital work to avert humanitarian catastrophe in the absence of peace.



Almost 21 million people in Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance across Yemen. Photo: UNHCR / S. Mantoo

Refugee Response

The current closure of seaports in Yemen is calling into question the upcoming, planned boat departures for the UNHCR-led Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme for Somali refugees. Yemen continues to be a temporary home to over 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers with families who sought safety from violence and persecution, now struggling to survive yet again. This year, UNHCR initiated an ASR programme, to support Somalis, the vast majority of the refugee caseload in Yemen, to return home in safety and in dignity. Helpdesks in Kharaz refugee camp in Lahj Governorate and in the Basateen area in Aden Governorate have been established, with over 2,300 individuals counselled on the return process, conditions in Somalia and the assistance package to support their reintegration at home. The help desks were established to ensure Somalis are fully informed of the voluntary process and to avoid families risking their lives at the hands of smugglers and unseaworthy vessels in an effort to leave Yemen. So far, some 1,356 individuals have confirmed their wish to return, with 418 Somalis already traveling to Somalia on IOM chartered boats in recent weeks. However, continuing insecurity and the closure of the seaport has affected and will continue to affect planned departures.

IDP Response

UNHCR is extremely concerned about the impact of the closure of land, sea and air borders on humanitarian activities, with the supply line for life-saving assistance impacted. Emergency assistance including shelter kits and essential household items destined for close to 40,000 war-impacted and displaced families has been interrupted in recent days. UNHCR is urgently seeking alternative support for the families identified as particularly vulnerable, many seeking shelter in caves, damaged homes, or in the open and exposed to the elements. In addition, fuel shortages have the potential to significantly affect UNHCR and partners' ability to carry out outreach activities and visit IDP families in remote locations, affecting the planned implementation of a further 50,000 CRI kits that are already in the country.

Despite the challenging access and security conditions, UNHCR has managed to reach and assist over 12,750 internally displaced people (IDP) in northern and southern governorates this week. Through partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), 848 families were helped in Sana'a, Amanat Al Asimah and Amran Governorates with CRIs, including mattresses, blankets and hygiene items, along with financial support to cover rent and protection needs. A further 724 families were reached in Yemen's northern governorate of Sa'ada and Al Jawf, through 2 new partners Yemeni Development Foundation (YDF) and Yemen Alkhair for Relief and Development (YARD). Assistance was prioritised for those most in need, however the needs of the population continue to vastly exceed the available humanitarian assistance in country. In the southern governorate of Lahj, UNHCR provided 250 newly displaced families who recently fled hostilities from neighbouring Taizz, with emergency household items through partner Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS).

UNHCR carries out missions to affected communities on a near daily basis, witnessing large-scale destruction of critical infrastructure and homes, and families regularly describing the psychological toll of ongoing war on their mental health. UNHCR-supported community and family centres provide a range of assistance to IDPs, including legal guidance and financial support, however increasingly affected communities are now also utilising counselling services that are on offer. Each day, across five centres in areas with high concentrations of IDPs, individuals seek mental health and psychosocial support. As the crisis becomes prolonged, the UNHCR approach aims to strengthen the family and wider community support mechanisms and promote positive-coping mechanisms of those affected. This week, family centres assisted some 230 individuals in distress with specialised support to alleviate the psychological and social stress of both their flight to safety, but also their harrowing living conditions while in displacement.

Contact: Aoife McDonnell, External Relations Officer, mcdonnel@unhcr.org

For more information, please follow us on Twitter at @UNHCRYemen and on Facebook at UNHCRYemen