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**OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR
AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN**

Escalating hostilities in Al Hudaydah Governorate put thousands of civilians at risk

Sana'a, 28 January 2021 – Concern is increasing for civilians in southern areas of Al Hudaydah Governorate following an uptick in clashes since mid-January, including shelling of residential areas, putting thousands of civilians at risk. Preliminary reports indicate there have already been civilian casualties, that houses and farms in Hays and Ad Durayhimi have been damaged and over a hundred families – at least 700 people – have been displaced.

“Indiscriminate attacks on residential areas are a breach of international humanitarian law and must stop immediately,” said Mr. Auke Lootsma, Humanitarian Coordinator a.i in Yemen. “The parties must remember that they have a duty to take all necessary measures to protect civilians at all times and allow humanitarians to respond to the injured and displaced.”

Across Al Hudaydah, up to eight civilian casualties were reported in the week of 20 January, and scores of houses and farms were damaged. Most casualties were women and children. Initial information indicates that about 120 families were displaced in Ad Durayhimi over the past week, verification of numbers is ongoing.

Field reports signal that clashes and shelling have continued in southern districts of Al Hudaydah over recent days, including in Ad Durayhimi and At Tuyahat, with little or no regard for civilians or their livelihoods.

“The conflict continues to exert misery on millions of lives,” said Mr. Lootsma “An immediate end to hostilities is urgently needed to allow humanitarians to conduct needs assessments and provide crucial medical support to wounded civilians and material support to those who have been displaced and lost their livelihoods.” One international medical organization has already engaged its mass casualty plan at a hospital serving the conflict-affected areas while another humanitarian organization is supporting local hospitals with medical items, including dressing kits, to treat the wounded.

The number of civilian casualties in Al Hudaydah Governorate is an ongoing cause of concern. In the last three months of 2020, 153 civilian casualties were reported in Al Hudaydah, the highest number reported in any governorate across the country, with continued clashes close to residential areas.

Yemen remains the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Nearly 80 per cent of the population – over 24 million people – require some form of humanitarian assistance and protection. Only 56 per cent of the US\$3.38 billion needed for the humanitarian response in 2020 has been received.
