

Situation Overview

Hostilities in Hajjah Governorate over the last three years have had a major humanitarian impact. In the last two months, escalated hostilities have killed tens of civilians and displaced hundreds of families from their homes especially in Haradh and Hayran districts.

Partners on the ground report that at least 300 families have been displaced in the last three weeks to Abs District where they live in difficult conditions. Displacement is also reported from Bani Hassan village in Abs and Al Hamrah village in Mustaba District, due to proximity to areas of fighting.

The hostilities in Hajjah intensified in mid-December 2018, with armed confrontations and shelling in Haradh, mainly around the main town and in Abs and Hayran Districts. Abs District already hosts an estimated 23,000 displaced families, most of whom have been displaced multiple times over the past four years, sometimes more, and are living in dire conditions. According to the Shelter Cluster, a total of 18,800 displaced families are living in 102 spontaneous settlements and collective centres in the district.

Hajjah is one of the governorates with the highest severity of needs in Yemen. The findings of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) released in December indicate that more than a million people, out of a total population of 2.5 million, are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Out of 31 districts in the governorate, 28 are classified at IPC Phase 4 (Emergency); 5 have pockets of populations at IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe). Some 13 districts are among the 104 districts in Yemen that have the highest convergence of needs.

Despite access and security challenges, 55 humanitarian partners were active in the governorate as on November; 9 UN, 17 international and 29 national NGOs. That included implementing and programme partners. The highest concentration of partners are in Abs and Hajjah city while the lowest numbers are in Sharas, Al Jamimah, Midi and Bani Al Awam districts.

Civilian casualties have mounted

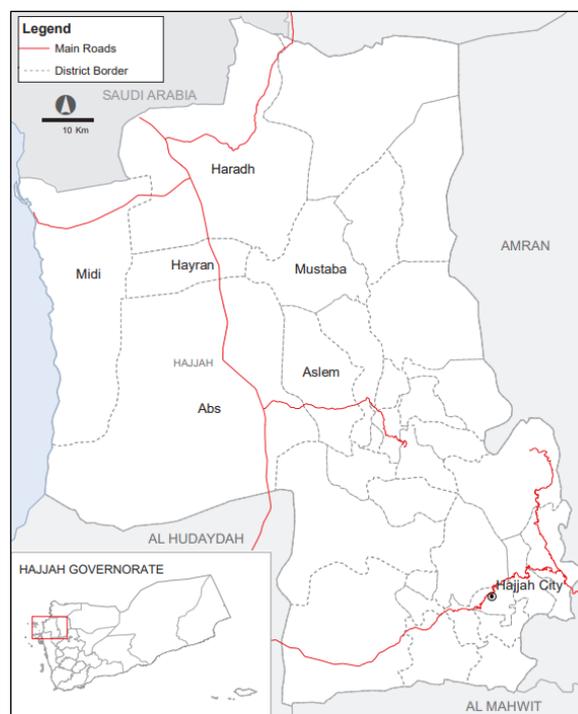
Over the last two months, the civilian toll has risen significantly. Between 5 and 10 January, at least 12 civilians were killed and another 12 injured by artillery shells and airstrikes, according to the Protection Cluster's Civilian Impact Monitoring Project. Eight of these casualties were killed when artillery shells struck houses in Ash Shallah village in Haradh District. This is the highest number of civilian casualties reported in a single incident in the governorate since August 2018.

From 10 to 16 of January, 20 civilian casualties were reported in two incidents in Haradh District. Of these, 15 were reported when shell fire hit a farm in Shalilah village, killing 8 civilians, including 3 children and 2 women, and injuring 7 others. The other 5 casualties including 2 fatalities, were caused by an airstrike that hit a residential house in Ash Shia'ab village.

On 26 January, a collective centre for internally displaced people (IDPs) was shelled in Bani Al Hadad, Haradh District, killing 8 people and wounding 30 others. The collective centre is located near an area where 6 children and 2 women were killed in another incident on 11 January.

The most serious needs are in Haradh District

In Haradh, the most affected district, hospitals and other public service providers have closed due to fighting. Prior to the recent escalation, many families used to shuttle back and forth between their villages and neighbouring districts to receive humanitarian assistance, but movement has become more restricted.



Map of Hajjah Governorate

Source: OCHA

During the week of 18-24 January, armed confrontations were reported in Almazraq and A'him Junction around the main town in the district. Partners on the ground reported that multiple airstrikes struck several locations in both Haradh and Midi districts, but no concrete information was available on civilian casualties. As mentioned above, 38 casualties were reported in one incident alone on 26 January in Bani Al Hadad.

Humanitarian Response

An inter-agency mission is planned for 27-29 January, to visit IDPs settlements in Abs district to solidify response coordination and engage with international and national NGOs operating in Hajjah Governorate. Partners on the ground report that there is a shortage of emergency shelters and NFIs for newly displaced families.

Some 570 newly displaced families in Abs District are reportedly in urgent need of shelter assistance. In response, IOM will provide 4,170 NFIs and 4,170 emergency shelter kits for distribution by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The WASH cluster reports a gap in sanitation facilities for 2,805 displaced families and a need to construct 1,962 latrines and to scale up the provision of water to displaced people in various collective centres in Abs District.

During the reporting period, an OCHA monitoring team visited two projects supported by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) in Hajjah. The team met various partners to discuss ongoing humanitarian responses. Efforts are also underway for the YHF to support the scale up of assistance for priority IDP collective sites. Below are other ongoing responses:

Food assistance

- Food Security and Agriculture Cluster partners provided 191,811 families (about 1,131,416 individuals) with both emergency food assistance and emergency livelihood assistance during December 2018.
- Starting in January 2019, WFP has increased its regular caseload to target around 1,366,673 people in the governorate with monthly emergency food assistance. Distribution is yet to start.

Shelter and non-food items

- UNHCR has provided rental subsidies of US\$200 to 514 displaced families for three months and winterization kits to 1,020 families. Through a local partner, the Agency has constructed 1,400 transitional shelters while 1,300 are under development in Abs District.
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has provided NFI packages to 441 newly displaced families in Hajjah City; emergency shelter kits and NFIs to another 97 displaced families in Ku'edinah District; and is assessing the shelter needs of 570 newly displaced families in Abs.

WASH

- An UNICEF partner has installed a solar pump for the water network in Shares District. The project serves 14,000 households (98,000 people).
- In Abs, a partner has installed solar pumps in the following sub-districts: Burman (serving 14,651 people); Bani Ahmed and Al Radaha (serving 27,097 people); Bahel (serving 6,650 people); Al Kett (serving 6,091 people); and Al Maasarah (serving 6,820 people).

Health

- WHO has provided Al Jamhouri Hospital with over 19,400 bottles of intravenous fluids and is providing 41,100 litres of fuel a month to five health facilities in the Governorate.
- IOM conducted 4,420 medical consultations in 12 health facilities and distributed 1,500 basic health kits for IDPs in Hyran District.

Protection

- The Protection Cluster is providing social counselling, psychological support, legal support and multi-purpose cash assistance to IDPs in 10 districts through the UNHCR' community centre for IDPs in Abs District.

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