

# HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

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Credit: IOM/ Headon Olivia

## Resources needed to sustain world's largest aid operation in 2020

### HIGHLIGHTS

Resources needed to sustain world's largest aid operation in 2020

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Aid organizations are finalizing the status report on the humanitarian operation in Yemen – a technical roll over from the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan. The status report, which outlines humanitarian response priorities for 2020, will highlight the financial requirements for this year. Of the UN's 41 major humanitarian programmes, 31 will either reduce or shut during April unless funding is urgently received.



**5 years**  
OF CONFLICT



**100K**  
PEOPLE HAVE  
DIED DUE TO  
COMBAT



**over 230**  
DISTRICTS ARE  
FOOD INSECURE



**only 50%**  
OF HEALTH  
FACILITIES  
ARE FULLY  
FUNCTIONAL



**3.6M**  
PEOPLE HAVE  
BEEN DISPLACED  
INCLUDING  
375K IN 2019



**46**  
DISTRICTS  
ARE AT HIGH  
RISK OF  
CHOLERA

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains the worst in the world, driven by five years of conflict, economic collapse and the breakdown of public institutions and services.

The scale, severity and complexity of needs in Yemen are staggering. As the crisis entered its sixth year, some 24 million people, 80 per cent of the entire population, continue to require some form of assistance or protection and close to half of all families are in acute need. Over 230 of Yemen's 333 governorates are food insecure. Conditions in these districts are the worst in the country: 103 districts are at risk of famine; 41 districts have malnutrition rates above 15 per cent; 54

districts have acute WASH deficits; and 46 districts are at high risk of cholera. Intensifying conflict has compromised access to health care while there are ongoing risks of cholera, malaria, dengue and other disease outbreaks; only 50 per cent of health facilities in Yemen are functioning, and services are restricted further by intermittent electricity and power outages across the country.

Even if the war was to end now, recovery would take decades. Yemen's economy has been badly fractured by half a decade of war. The country has lost US\$90 billion in economic output, and gross domestic product has declined by 50 per cent, one of the steepest declines anywhere in the world.



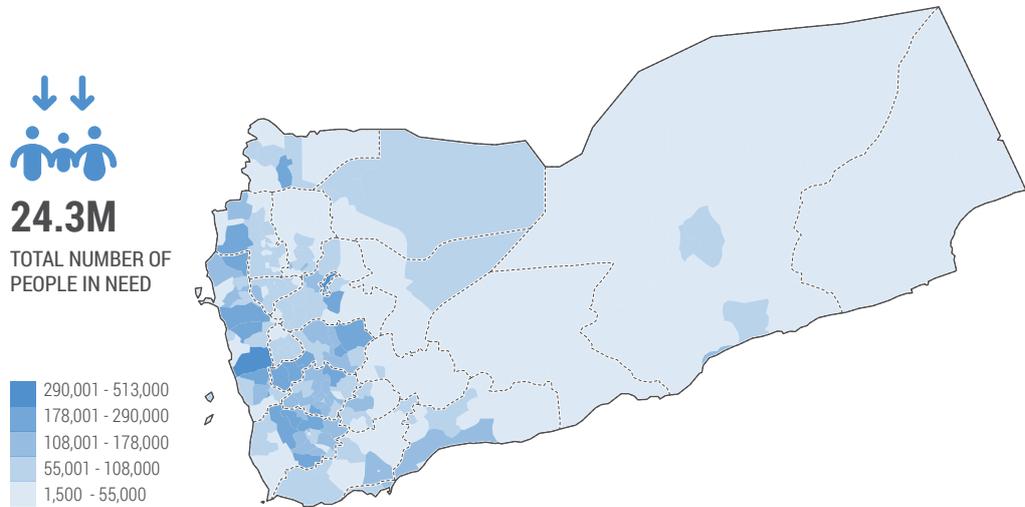
OCHA

YEMEN

Lack of resources will disrupt core, life-saving services for millions of people, including emergency food aid, treatment for malnourished

children, vaccines for children and shelter for families fleeing conflict.

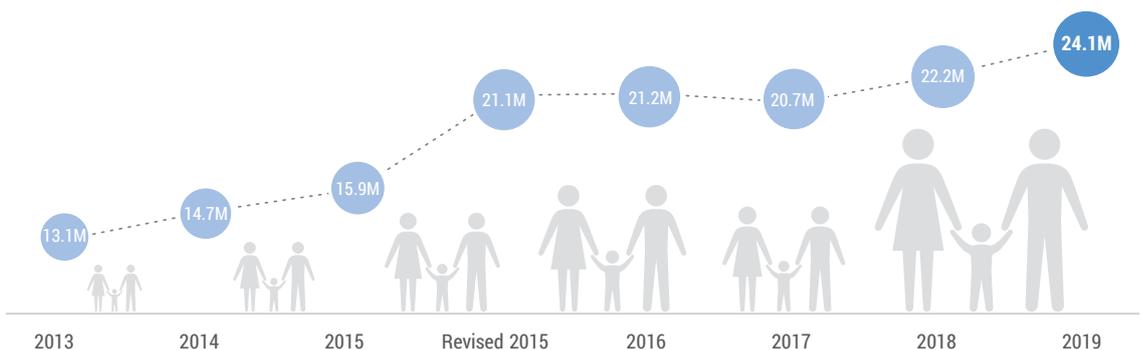
## People in need of humanitarian assistance



## The food insecurity situation continues to deteriorate

Conflict and the collapse of the economy remain the main drivers of food insecurity in Yemen, curtailing food access, disrupting livelihoods, reducing incomes, and leading to high prices of food and non-food commodities. Five years of conflict have left the country's infrastructure devastated, with major overland routes, sea- and airports severely damaged. The escalation in hostilities in Marib and Al Jawf governorates between January and March this year, and ongoing conflict in other locations has led to the displacement of thousands more people. IDPs face worse food security outcomes than other sections of the population due to exhausted coping strategies, limited social networks support, and disrupted livelihoods.

In the first quarter of 2020, economic forecasts indicate that macro-economic conditions are likely to continue deteriorating. The situation is exacerbated by lack of humanitarian access to people in urgent need of food assistance, and a shortage of funding as some donors are defunding starting in April. Recent data indicates that increments in food prices is a result of the depreciating currency and especially the disparity between the exchange rates in northern and southern governorates. The exchange rate affects the price of imported staple commodities – Yemen is largely dependent on food imports and wheat import dependency currently stands at 95 per cent and rice at 100 per cent.



*Humanitarian needs have continued to grow significantly after the war broke out in 2015*



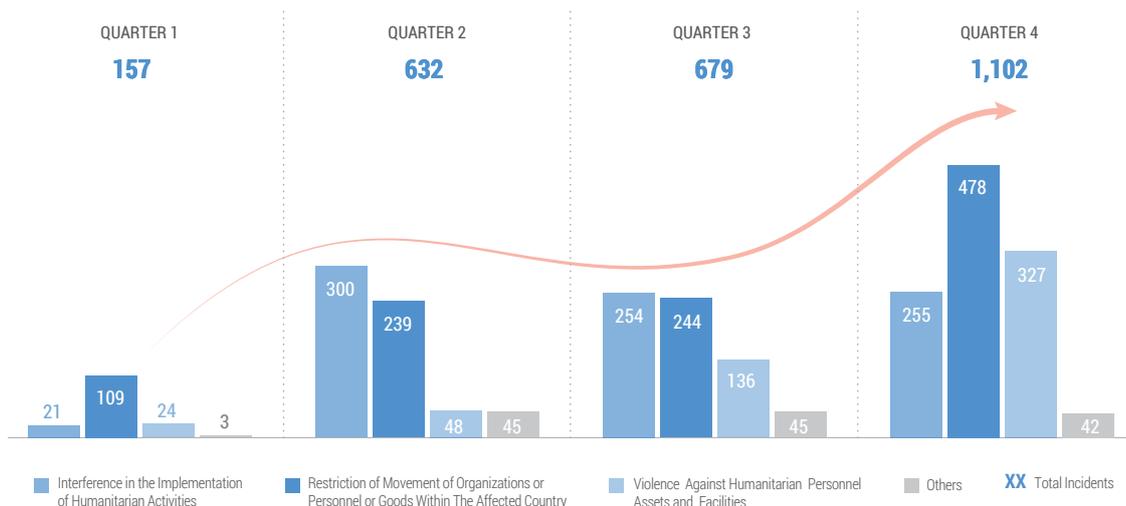
In 2019, Food Security and Agriculture partners increased their reach from 9.4 million in January to 13.5 million in December, which helped alleviate severe food insecurity levels in many districts, including rolling back catastrophic conditions in 29 out of 45 districts.

The measures introduced by the authorities against COVID-19 have not yet disrupted trade or humanitarian operations. However, disruptions are a risk as screening and quarantine measures could delay the movement of goods, as humanitarian organizations take action to protect staff. This could reduce food availability, increase food prices, and further restricting food access for millions of people. FSAC partners are ensuring programme continuity in case of a COVID-19 outbreak and are in the process of instituting mitigation, preparedness and programming measures accordingly.

While humanitarian access challenges are longstanding in Yemen, 2019 witnessed a rapidly shrinking humanitarian space mainly during the last half of the year. Despite this difficult operational environment, FSAC partners assisted 13.1 million individuals with emergency food assistance in 329 districts in February 2020 compared to 9.5 million in February 2019. In addition, 300,000 individuals in 82 districts

were provided with various forms of livelihoods assistance (emergency agricultural, livestock or fisheries kits; cash for work and longer-term livelihoods activities). By the end of March 2020, cluster partners had provided food baskets to more than 970 newly displaced households in Al Jawf and 2,740 newly displaced households in Marib governorates. In April, partners will support approximately 200 households in Al Jawf and 2,700 households in Marib. FSAC partners have also responded in southern governorates affected by recent flooding.

A Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment is ongoing in northern governorates while in southern governorates, survey results are under analysis. A country-wide Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) report outlining the food security needs will be published later in the year.



The last half of 2019 witnessed an increase in access challenges. Data source: OCHA and partners.

## Aid continues to reach conflict-displaced persons in Marib and Al Jawf

Families reached with assistance



RRM

RRM

5,032

MPCA

4,552



FSAC

FSAC

3,638



Shelter/NFI

Shelter

3,638

NFIs

2,025



WASH

Water

1,330

Hygiene

1,208

Sanitation

345

Heavy fighting continued throughout March on the Al Jawf – Marib fronts, forcing thousands more people to flee. About 7,500 families were displaced between 19 January and 23 March as the result of escalated conflict in Marib, Al Jawf and Sana'a governorates. On 1 March, when clashes broke out in Al Hazm City in Al Jawf Governorate, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that about 2,000 families fled in just 24 hours, while according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over 1,750 families were displaced from Al Jawf and from Raghwan District in Marib between 1 March and 18 March. Displacement numbers are likely to be higher as movements are fluid. About 95 per cent of displaced families are in Marib City, Marib Al Wadi, Raghwan and Medghal districts in Marib Governorate, where many are staying in overcrowded public buildings, displacement sites and with the local community. At least 1,260 families were reported to be scattered in Nihm District in Sana'a Governorate by the third week of March.

Over 1,000 families are reported to have fled within Al Jawf Governorate, where there have



Partners are scaling up response in Marib and Al Jawf

been intensive clashes since the second week of March, including air strikes particularly around Khab wa sha Asha'af District. Hundreds more families from Marib and Al Jawf have also headed for Hadramaut Governorate.

By 23 March, partners had registered 7,553 displaced households across Marib, Sana'a, and Hadramaut governorates and were providing life-saving assistance to newly displaced households.

## Authorities, aid agencies step up measures to curb COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has now been confirmed in over 200 countries as of 5 April and is creating unprecedented challenges and threats to the world. A COVID-19 outbreak, if it happens in Yemen, could overwhelm the country's weak health infrastructure, which is already functioning at half-capacity as a result of five years of conflict. In the absence of resources to respond, and given the pre-existing vulnerabilities, the priority in Yemen is to sustain the current humanitarian operation and continue helping the millions of people who rely on humanitarian assistance; to continue providing food assistance, cash intervention, health care services, WASH, protection, nutrition and shelter assistance to the most vulnerable families. Diverting attention from existing humanitarian activities will have devastating effects on the people of Yemen.

Humanitarian partners are actively engaging local communities and their leadership through COVID-19 information campaigns. Some 13 governorates have been reached with awareness raising activities. Local hotline phone numbers have also been established to enable suspected cases to be reported.

On their part the authorities have introduced a raft of precautionary measures to prevent COVID-19



Aid agencies are stepping up response in quarantine sites. Photo by UNFPA

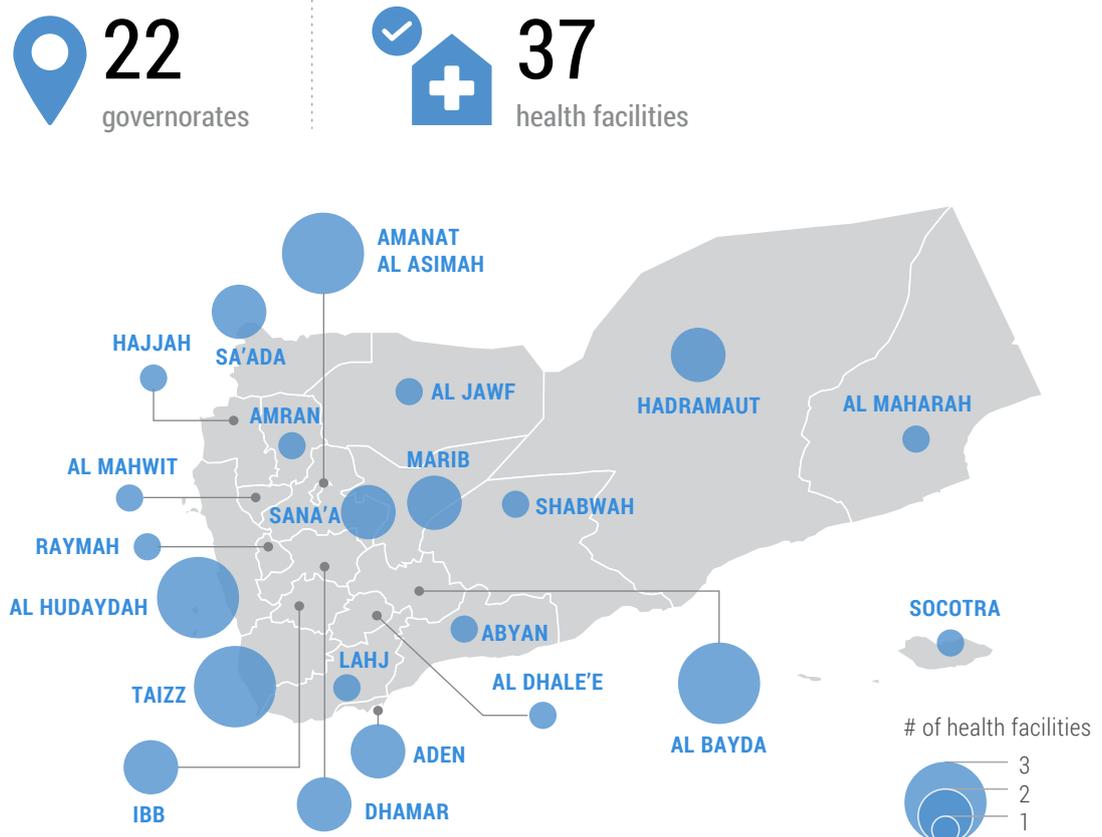
including school closures, movement restrictions across land borders (national borders and internal borders between northern and southern areas), suspended flights, and increased screening, banned gatherings and quarantine measures at ports.

WHO is supporting health authorities to scale up their operational readiness for COVID-19 by providing medical supplies, testing kits, training, and information campaigns. Some 75 ventilators have been distributed to the hospitals identified for isolation capacity and training for medical

personnel on how to operate the ventilators is being conducted. Surveillance capacity and laboratory preparedness have been scaled up. Nearly 1,000 Health Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) across the country are working to detect, assess, alert and respond to all alerts related to COVID-19. WHO has provided 500 COVID-19 testing kits and there are 25 functional Emergency Operations Centres in Yemen. A quarantine facility

was set up at Sana'a Airport and equipped an isolation facility in Zayed Hospital in Sana'a City. Some 80 health workers were trained on clinical management, infection prevention and control and triage and surveillance. Some 37 health facilities across the country have been identified to serve as COVID-19 isolation units.

## Number of health facilities to serve as COVID-19 isolation units by governorates



## Aid agencies respond to flood-affected families in southern governorates

On 24 and 25 March, heavy rains hit southern governorates, badly affecting Lahj, Aden, Abyan, Taizz, Al Dale'e, Al Mahrah and Hadramaut governorates. Sites for internally displaced people were worst affected, where rains destroyed shelters and property, leaving them flooded with stagnant water. Initial assessments indicated that at least 4,625 families were affected in 60 IDP sites. In Aden, torrential rains flooded houses and roads in Crater and Al Mualla districts. In Hadramaut, houses, road bridges, water networks, and crops were destroyed and livestock drowned in Al Sawm, Hajr, Mayfa and Brom districts. In close

collaboration with OCHA and the Executive Unit for IDPs, the Camp Management and Camp Coordination Cluster is coordinating the response at IDP sites working with the Shelter/Non-Food Items, the Food Security and Agriculture, the Water Sanitation and Hygiene and the Protection clusters. For further details of the situation and the humanitarian response, see: [reliefweb](https://reliefweb.org/)

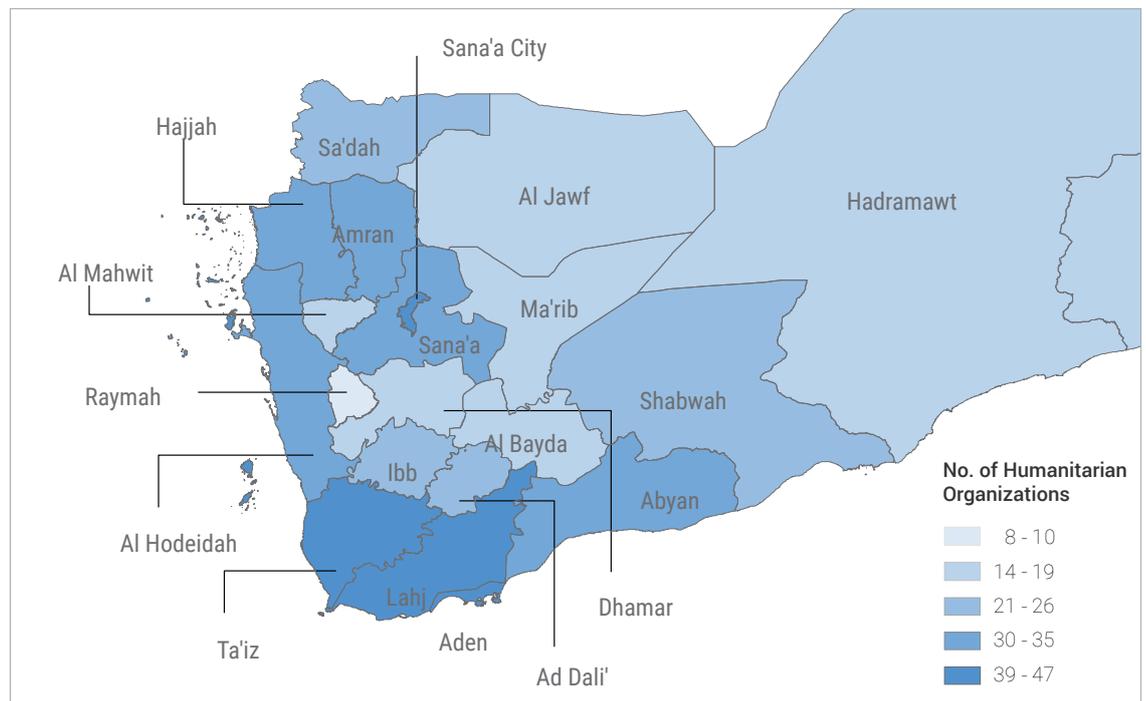
## Yemen Humanitarian Fund allocates US\$3.5m to ensure critical services continue

In March, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) launched a reserve allocation to support the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and Emergency Telecommunication (ETC) services in Yemen. The two service providers were at risk of closure due to a short-term funding gap.

ETC services will continue at six hubs across the country, providing critical connectivity to humanitarian partners in Yemen and enabling them to work efficiently. The funding will also

ensure the safety and security of humanitarians by providing technical support and maintenance of security communications infrastructure and services. Services are provided in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Al Mukha, Al Mukalla, Ibb and Sana'a. In 2019 ETC services and support were provided to 41 partners across the country.

Both ETC and UNHAS are operated by WFP on behalf of the humanitarian community.



*In 2019 ETC services and support were provided to 41 partners across the country. Source: ETC Cluster*

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