

Statement by humanitarian organizations in Yemen on allegations of corruption and bias in the provision of relief assistance

17 December 2017

As humanitarian organizations working in Yemen we condemn in the strongest possible terms the allegations of corruption and bias in the provision of relief assistance that continue to be put forward by the parties to the conflict in Yemen without proper substantiation.

United in our commitment to humanitarian action that preserves the life and dignity of people in need, we continue to provide assistance in Yemen in full respect of humanitarian principles, including impartiality, humanity, neutrality and operational independence. Rigorous oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure the highest standards of aid delivery and accountability towards the affected population. When incidents of aid diversion have occurred, we have engaged, at the highest level, with authorities and local leaders to ensure that humanitarian principles are understood and respected so that people in need receive the assistance to which they are entitled.

In fulfilling the humanitarian imperative to save and protect the lives of the most vulnerable, we maintain neutrality in our work and do not take sides with any of the parties to the conflict. Proximity to population in need is a critical consideration in the establishment of the operational presence and programmatic footprint. Unimpeded humanitarian access is essential to assess vulnerabilities, implement and monitor an effective response. We denounce any attempt to interfere in the delivery of aid as undermining the independence of humanitarian action.

Our staff work under very difficult circumstances in an extremely volatile environment to provide emergency food and nutrition, health, water, shelter and protection assistance to millions of people whose survival is treated by all parties to the conflict as a collateral factor in a war fought in utter disregard for international humanitarian law.

Unfounded accusations levelled at the humanitarian community threaten the safety and protection of humanitarian workers and compromise our ability to respond at a time when our work is most needed.

Ongoing violence across Yemen has left more than 22 million people in need of humanitarian aid and protection. In less than three years, more than 60,000 people have been killed or injured and 17.8 million have been left without access to enough food each day. Over eight million people depend on relief assistance to stay alive. The protracted blockade on the importation of commercial goods through Yemen's main seaports is further exacerbating a dire crisis, propelling millions of people towards starvation. Behind every one of these catastrophic numbers is an individual who relies on the humanitarian community to sustain themselves.

Yemen cannot wait, time for action is now. All the parties to the conflict in Yemen, and those with influence over them, should put the lives and survival of the millions of innocent civilians at the forefront. Much more should be done to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of the civilian population, and to facilitate unimpeded access to people in need.

Humanitarian organizations will continue to deliver assistance to those who need it, but we know that aid is not the answer for Yemen. A political solution is more urgent than ever to stop the unnecessary suffering of millions of Yemenis.



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