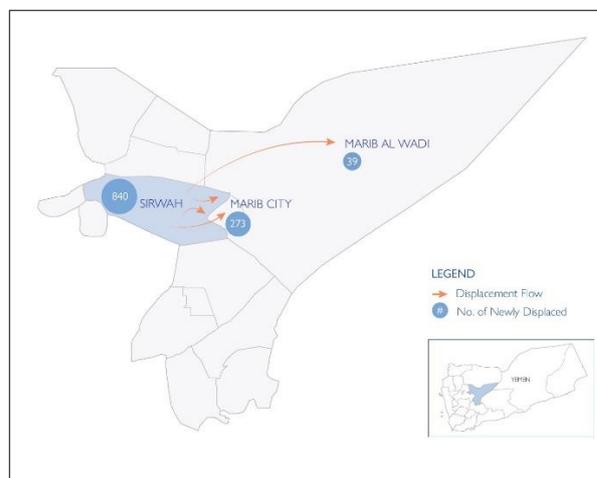


SITUATION OVERVIEW

Intense clashes which broke out in several districts of Ma'rib Governorate in the first week of February 2021 have continued, leading to the displacement of more than 8,000 civilians. Initial field reports indicate massive displacement within Ma'rib Governorate, especially from Sirwah District, which has seen the heaviest fighting.

Ma'rib Governorate already hosts an estimated one million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – the largest IDP population in Yemen according to local authorities – and some live in approximately 125 IDP sites. Sirwah District hosts around 30,000 displaced people in at least 14 displacement sites, and there are reports of fighting close to several sites. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on average, some people have been displaced three times and most newly displaced people had been living in displacement sites, with some reportedly carrying their shelters with them to their new locations.



IOM estimates that 1,152 families have been displaced since 8 February. Source: IOM

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT AND NEEDS

As of 24 February, the overall civilian casualty figures and the number of displaced persons remain unclear due to continued fighting in the affected areas. IOM estimates that 1,152 families (8,064 individuals) have been displaced since 8 February, while the Executive Unit for IDPs (Government of Yemen) estimates that 1,517 families (10,619 individuals) were displaced over the past two weeks. Aid agencies estimate that the actual number of displaced families might be much higher. Most displaced families fled to safer areas within Sirwah and Ma'rib Al Wadi districts and Ma'rib City. The majority of displacement is secondary from existing IDP sites and locations to safer areas in Sirwah. At least three IDP sites in Sirwah – Al-Zur, Dhanah Alhayal, Dhanah (Alsawabin) and Almustashfa – were impacted by the fighting and one of them has emptied due to hostilities and two health facilities had to suspend operations. There have also been reports in recent weeks of houses being damaged during hostilities, including in Ma'rib City and Sirwah. IOM estimates that 50 per cent of those displaced by the fighting in Sirwah are women, while 30 per cent are children.

With continued fighting, more civilians are expected to continue to flee towards the eastern outskirts of Sirwah and into Ma'rib City, where IDP sites are already crowded and response capacities are overstretched. Should hostilities move towards the city and surrounding areas, it could displace another 385,000 people outside of the city and into Hadramawt, while limiting humanitarian access and placing significant strains on the already limited resources.

There has been widespread concern by member states of the escalating hostilities in Ma'rib Governorate. At the UN Security Council briefing on 18 February, ERC/USG Mark Lowcock [warned](#) that the escalation of attacks on Ma'rib was extremely dangerous and threatened "to send hundreds of thousands of people again running for their lives at a time when everyone should be doing everything possible to stop famine." On 19 February, a spokesperson Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights also expressed increasing concern for the fate of civilians and urged parties to the conflict to protect all civilians and to respect international humanitarian law principles on the conduct of hostilities.

Assessment of the needs of 958 families has been completed and are ongoing for an additional 337 families. Humanitarian partners on the ground have identified shelter, non-food items, food, water and sanitation, health and protection assistance as urgent needs.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Humanitarian partners continue to scale up response in areas where IDPs are accessible. Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRM) have been activated and are ready to provide life-saving assistance to newly displaced families, including ready-to-eat food, hygiene kits and women transit kits. As of 23 February, RRM partners have supported 1,205 displaced families, while an additional 2,000 RRM kits have been mobilized.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) partners supported 243 newly displaced families with tents and NFIs, while the distribution of 183 NFI kits is planned to start shortly. Additional supplies – 1,000 NFI packages and 500 enhanced emergency shelter kits (EESKs) are currently being mobilized. As armed conflict in Ma'rib continues to cause further displacement, it is critical to highlight that available stocks related to Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items kits are alarmingly low due to funding shortage. This will force internally displaced persons, especially the most vulnerable, to live in makeshift sub-standard shelters with no access to essential household items.

Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) partners have received lists of IDPs and verification is ongoing. They have also provided 611 families with one-off food assistance. Plans are underway to provide food assistance to 4,100 families. WASH Cluster partners are supporting 930 newly displaced families hosted at Al Rawdah area IDP site in Sirwah District with daily water trucking (an average of 93,000 litres a day) and water storage capacity (527 family tanks planned by next week). There are two partners providing WASH services through water trucking to existing IDP sites in Rawdah area. One of them is working on a network rehabilitation and expansion project that is almost completed.

Health partners relocated health workers from Al Zur health facility, where operations were suspended due to hostilities, to Al Rawdah health facility to serve the newly displaced population. Additional health equipment and supplies are being shipped to support operations at Al Rawdah health facility. In the meantime, a mobile team has been redirected to cover needs in Al Rawdah until the health facility is operational. Health Cluster partners shipped 9 surgical supply kits, blood bags and anesthesia drugs to Ma'rib Central and Al-Shaheed Mohammed Hayel hospitals. 63 Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) modules were also shipped to Al-Shaheed Mohammed Hayel hospital and one mobile team was deployed to Ma'rib City. Some 30 IEHK modules will be mobilized from Hadramout. Another 20 IEHK modules will be delivered to respond to needs in Ma'rib Governorate through 4 mobile clinics supporting IDPs sites. An additional 10 IEHK modules will be delivered to support IDPs in Al-Abr. ICRC is supporting the trauma hospital; it has already provided 700 body bags for dead bodies and will renovate the mortuary.

Protection Cluster partners are responding with cash assistance, legal counselling, and psychosocial support (PSS) targeting all newly displaced families, while protection monitoring is ongoing. In addition, two Women and Girls Safe Spaces and mobile teams have assisted 1,993 individuals, providing them with psychological first aid, legal aid, awareness sessions and referrals since January 2021. They are also delivering Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and life skills in five schools in Ma'rib City, in addition to regular case management and MHPSS activities targeting conflict-affected districts and districts hosting IDPs across Ma'rib Governorate. There is an urgent need to expand women's protection services within IDP sites. The number of mobile outreach teams need to be increased immediately to meet rising protection needs. Urgent support is also needed to establish a women's shelter in Ma'rib but limited funding is affecting the capacity to scale up the response. Mine Action partners continue to provide mine risk education (MRE) in 17 schools in Ma'rib City and Ma'rib Al Wadi and MRE training for 40 civil society organization facilitators in Sirwah, Madghal Al Jid'an, Majzar and Harib Al Qaramish districts. In addition, the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) is providing mine clearance emergency response for any threats reported by IDP and host communities.

Limited funding continues to affect aid agencies' ability to scale up the response. On 1 March, the UN will convene a virtual high-level pledging event for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen co-hosted by the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland to mobilize resources to address the urgent needs of millions of people across the country for humanitarian assistance.
