

HIGHLIGHTS

- Protection of civilians remains a concern
- Erosion of the health system and deteriorating food insecurity
- 3.6 m people reached by direct assistance by end of April
- Refugees continue to arrive in Yemen

Total population	26 m
# of people targeted by assistance	13.6 m
# of people targeted by health care assistance	10.6 m
# of people targeted by food assistance	8.9 m
# of people displaced	2.8 m
# of deaths (WHO)	6,494
# of injuries (WHO)	31,401

Source: HRP and HNO-WHO

FUNDING

\$1.8 billion
requested

\$349 million
funding against HRP

19% funded

OCHA Director of Operations John Ging:

“The people of Yemen must be at the centre of this response, and our collective duty is to protect them and provide them with food, health, shelter and other vital support”



Vaccination in Yemen credit: WHO

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Peace Talks Continue

As of May 2016, the Cessation of Hostilities that started on 10 April, continues to hold in large parts of Yemen. According to the UN Special Envoy on Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Cessation held in around 80-90% of the country. However, violence continues as armed clashes flared in Al Baydah, Al Hudaydah Al Jawf, Hajjah, Marib, Taizz Governorates and Nihm District in Sana'a Governorate. Violations to the Cessation were reported in Al Jawf, Marib and Taiz, including air strikes, the launch of ballistic missiles, the movement of ground troops and the use of heavy weapons. These incidents continued to cause death, destruction and suffering. Continued fighting also poses an ongoing threat to the peace process in Kuwait, which was disrupted multiple times due to clashes. On 21 May, the UN Secretary General stated that:

“The talks in Kuwait are critical for peace. I strongly urge the leaders of all parties to show the flexibility and wisdom needed to reach an agreement that will allow Yemenis to heal the wounds of this war and look ahead to a better future. As those efforts continue, the Saudi-led Coalition and all combatants must do more to avoid civilian casualties”

Protection of civilians

Protection of civilians remains a priority, particularly as the scale of the protection crisis in Yemen and its impact on children goes often underreported. Children are bearing the brunt of the conflict, UNICEF estimates that an average of six children have been killed or injured every day between March 2015 and April 2016. As of 19 May, WHO reported that over 6,494 people have been killed and over 31,401 injured in the last year. The actual casualty numbers are likely to be much higher. These figures are from the records of functioning health facilities. However, not all have access to health facilities, and the access has been reduced further over the last year as many facilities have closed due to damage and displacement of staff. Also, people might choose not to bring their affected family members to health facilities, especially those who have already been killed.

Conflict damage to key civilian infrastructure, including ports, roads, schools, and hospitals, has significantly hampered humanitarian assistance and will affect development assistance well beyond the end of the current conflict. UNICEF reports that over 1,600 schools across Yemen remain closed because they have been totally or partially damaged or are occupied by armed groups or by IDPs. The number of children out of school, close to 2 million, points to a lost generation if educational services are not restored. At least 192 nutrition centres across Yemen are closed either due to insecurity or lack of key supplies such as fuel.

In the face of continued violations, the humanitarian community in Yemen continues to appeal to all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law during military operations and all feasible precautions taken to minimise civilian casualties and damage to any civilian infrastructure. Members States, in particular, international and regional donors with influence over the warring parties, have a key role and responsibility in demanding compliance with IHL. The humanitarian community also echoes the UN Secretary General's call on regional organizations involved in negotiating peace agreements to include specific provisions to enhance the protection of children.

On 2 June 2016, the Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict detailed the scale of violations committed against children in a number of countries, including Yemen. The report notes a fivefold increase in the recruitment of child soldiers. This has been documented along with a six-fold increase in the number of children killed or maimed in 2015 as compared to 2014. Air strikes have been identified as responsible for some 60 per cent of the 785 children who were killed and 1,168 who were wounded in Yemen last year.

Concern grows over the erosion of the health system and rising food insecurity

There are growing concerns about the inability of the health system to provide for the population in need and the likely deterioration of food insecurity as a result of scarcity of food supplies and rising food prices.

The health system

With regard to health, Yemen's faltering healthcare system is suffering from a combination of factors, including limited import of fuel and medicines, destruction of medical facilities, displacement of medical staff and the economic crisis which has health institutions on the brink of collapse. As a result people are dying from chronic and preventable diseases. WHO estimates that only 30 per cent of the medicine needed is now coming into Yemen. The stock of insulin is estimated to run out in three months if pipelines are not replenished. The lack of fuel and medicine means the health system itself is on life support. The critical lack of fuel, power, water and oxygen is drastically affecting all hospital services, particularly Intensive Care Units and dialysis centres.

Because of the failing health system, humanitarian partners are working beyond their traditional emergency health assistance mandate by supporting the provision of basic health services. The purchasing power of people is seriously declining and the prices of medicine is going up resulting in private health care services no longer being affordable to the vast majority of the population. Humanitarian relief, however, cannot provide for the entire population or replace the national health system. The health cluster has received only 16 per cent of its overall funding requirements leaving a funding gap of \$152 million to sustain emergency health services across the country. However, supporting and safeguarding the institutional capacity of Yemen's health services is also an immediate priority.

Growing food insecurity

With regard to food security, in April 2016, WFP reported a further deterioration of availability of basic food commodities in Al Bayda, Al Jawf, Hajja Marib, Sa'ada, Shabwa, Sana'a and Taizz, mainly due to scarcity of fuel that affected transportation of goods and movements of traders. Food imports in April decreased by 21 per cent since March and 47 per cent when compared with February.

In April, the national average price of wheat flour was 12 per cent higher than the pre-crisis period (ranging from 4 per cent in Amran to 70 per cent in Taizz). WFP warns that the precarious food security situation of millions of vulnerable people is likely to worsen. This is due to severely reduced income levels due to disruption of livelihoods, unemployment and the impact of the devaluation of Yemeni Rial against the US Dollar.

WFP is urgently calling for \$284 million to prevent a pipeline break or drastic reduction in food assistance from August 2016. FAO has also called for \$20 million to deliver the inputs needed for the planting season, the summer fishing season, and the vaccination of livestock in time for winter. FAO also highlights the outbreak of locust which threatens the livelihoods of 100,000 farmers, beekeepers, and herders in Abyan, Hadramaut, Al Hudaydah, Hajjah, Marib and Shabwa.

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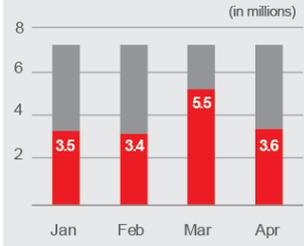
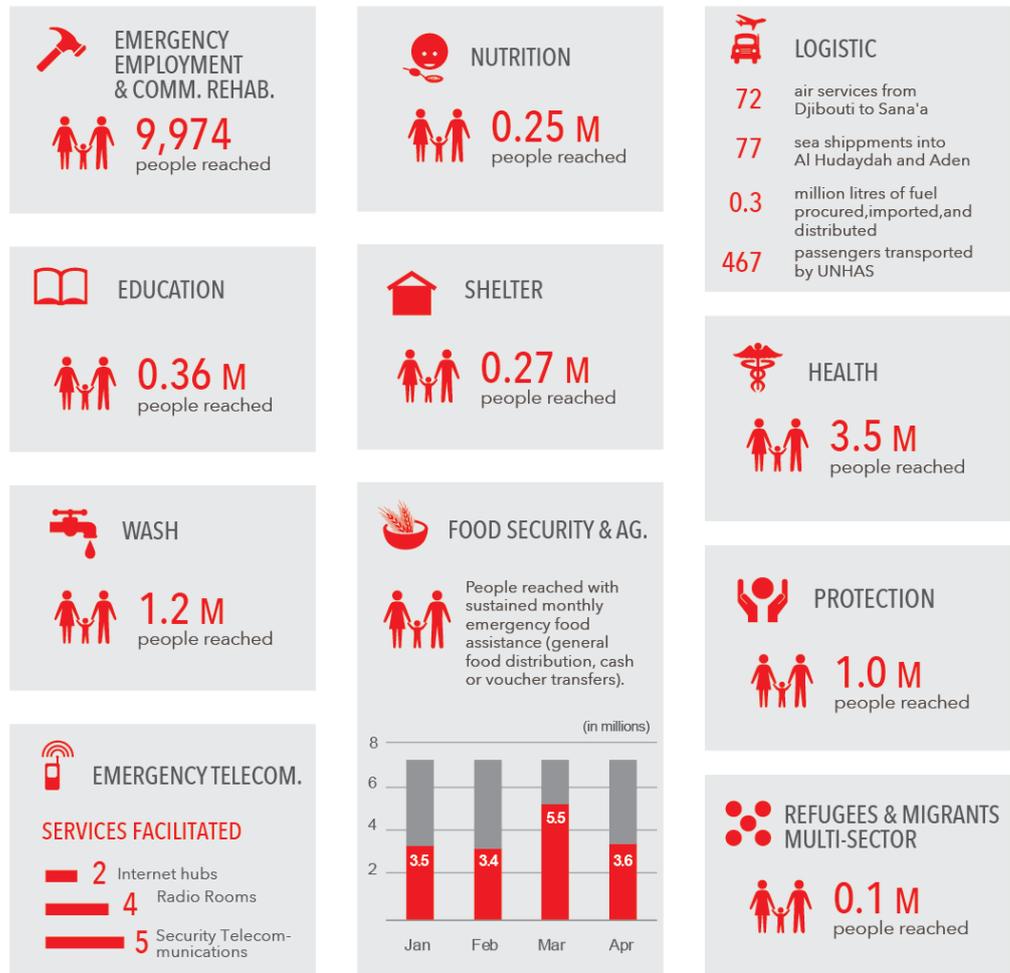
The humanitarian response

In 2016, humanitarians are prioritizing life-saving assistance to 13.6 million people across Yemen.

Despite the deepening needs, particularly in sectors of health and food security, and the many access challenges faced by the humanitarian community due to continued insecurity and hurdles to humanitarian access, by the end of April 2016, over 3.6 million people were reached with some form of direct humanitarian assistance by close to 100 humanitarian organizations across Yemen as reported below:



ACHIEVEMENTS BY CLUSTER



Source: Clusters, April 2016

To strengthen the Level 3 effort (highest level of emergency declared by the UN) in Yemen, a joint mission by the Emergency Directors of OCHA, WFP and WHO visited Yemen in mid-May. The mission engaged humanitarian partners, Yemeni authorities and other key stakeholders in order to review progress achieved so far in meeting humanitarian needs and address ongoing challenges in relation to the scale up of programmes.

Upon return from the mission, OCHA Director John Ging in his briefing to the press in New York highlighted that “Seeing the plight of the Yemeni people first hand reinforces the need for national and international humanitarian actors to scale up their response to protect and support the population”.

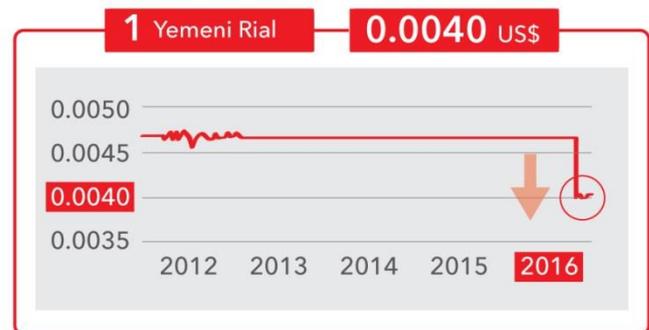
Director Ging made a crucial appeal to the parties of the conflict to prioritize the protection of civilians and civilian needs, and to swiftly enable unhindered humanitarian access so that humanitarian actors have sustained, unhindered and safe access to all people in need, particularly in the governorates of Aden and Al Jawf, Hajjah, Sa’ada and Taizz. To the donor community, Mr. Ging appealed for an urgent increase in attention and support

for the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, which requires \$1.8 billion to reach over 13 million people this year, but remains shockingly underfunded at only 19 per cent.

Increasing concerns about the economy

Yemen's economy has been severely affected by conflict. According to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen's GDP contracted nearly 35 per cent in 2015. This is largely driven by a 75 per cent decline in oil and gas revenues (US\$3.7M). This represents more than the total public budget expenses on education, health, and social protection. The Ministry also highlighted decreases in the foreign reserves of the Central Bank of Yemen to worrying levels. In April, FEWS NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network) reported that further depreciation of the Rial is likely resulting in reduced import levels, rising food prices and a weakening of household purchasing power and food access.

Depreciation of the Yemeni Rial



Source: Google

The conflict has also damaged the supply chain for the import of basic goods. This is especially critical in Yemen, as the country depends on imports to cover 90 per cent of its monthly needs for food, fuel and other basic commodities. The severe reduction in imports is bringing about profound suffering to the Yemeni people.

International commercial shipping faces a number of significant barriers including high insurance costs, damage to port infrastructure, and security concerns. The practical impact of this can be seen by looking at the level of fuel imports, which were just 12 per cent of projected need in April 2016.

To help improve the flow of commercial goods into Yemen, the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) was instituted to facilitate the flow of commercial goods and services to Yemen, while ensuring compliance with the arms embargo established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015).

UNVIM has provided fast and impartial clearance services for shipping companies transporting commercial imports and bilateral assistance to Yemeni ports that are not under the control of the Government of Yemen. As of 6 June 2016, UNVIM has received 59 clearance requests and issued 46 clearances. While eleven 11 of the cleared vessels have berthed one vessel is still under inspection and remaining requests are being processed. Thirty-five cleared vessels are waiting in the anchorage area outside the Al Hudaydah port, due to continued off-loading delays. Cleared vessels are transporting fuel, food and containerized cargo.



Reduced capacity at Al Hudaydah port Credit: OCHA Yemen

The vessels that have berthed and discharged have met only 13.5 per cent of pre-crisis monthly fuel needs and 8.5 per cent of monthly food needs. Should all these vessels discharge, they would cover 78 per cent of monthly fuel needs and the equivalent of two months of pre-crisis food needs.

*“Further depreciation of the Rial is likely resulting in reduced import levels, rising food prices and a weakening of household purchasing power and food access”
FEWS NET*

Yemen Refugee Response

Despite the ongoing conflict, refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants continue to arrive in Yemen. In the first three months of the year, over 28,700 people arrived in Yemen from Ethiopia and Somalia. While the people of Yemen are suffering from a prolonged conflict, lack of commodities, basic services and income opportunities, the country continues to receive close to 100,000 new arrivals a year. Most of these are prompted by lack of livelihood opportunities, drought and violence in their home countries, and try to transit through Yemen to find labour opportunities in the Gulf States. UNHCR and partners work to identify and support those in need of protection among the mixed movements of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants arriving on Yemeni shores.

At the end of March, the total number of refugees in country stood at approximately 268,000 people, the vast majority of whom are Somalis. UNHCR and partners conduct coastal monitoring, distribute clothing and food, arranges for medical support including vaccinations, accommodates new arrivals in reception centres, screen the new arrivals and provide asylum seekers with documentation. Asylum seekers and refugees with specific needs are transported to Aden, where UNHCR/IOM and partners provide basic support. Asylum seekers, who enter Yemen from Bab Al-Mandab in Taizz Governorate, approach the Kharaz refugee camp, where they are registered and receive assistance including food rations from WFP.

Most refugees in Yemen live in urban areas with the highest number of refugees based in Aden governorate followed by Sana'a. Kharaz refugee camp, in Lahj Governorate is the only refugee camp in Yemen and home to approximately 18,000 refugees. In the camp refugees receive monthly food rations through WFP, health and wash services along with shelter support. Struggling with limited livelihoods options, refugees also seek employment opportunities outside the camp.

UNHCR reports that the escalation of the conflict since late March 2015 has put the refugees and asylum seekers in a fragile position as many are not able to renew their documentation and lose employment opportunities. Refugees along with undocumented migrants are increasingly subject to arbitrary arrest and detention as well as trafficking and smuggling. Many join the increasing group of jobless persons, resorting to negative coping mechanisms and heavily indebting themselves. Still, many refugees show remarkable resilience and manage to find themselves a living. Refugee leaders support vulnerable women, children, elderly and disabled in their communities, in cooperation with UNHCR and partners.

UNHCR operations in Yemen remain challenged by lack of safety of its humanitarian workers and constraints to access beneficiaries particularly in hard-to-reach coastal areas. This has greatly affected staff movement and hampered the delivery of assistance. Security concerns prompted UNHCR and partners to suspend protection and assistance activities in the reception centre in Bab Al-Mandab, which remains closed as of early May. The reception centre used to offer basic services such as water and first aid to new arrivals crossing by boat. A similar reception centre in Mayfaa in Shabwa remains open.



People arriving at the Arabian Sea coast
Credit: Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS) via UNHCR

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at www.unocha.org/yemen | www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int