

Increased conflict in Aden threatens further disruption to livelihoods and port activities

KEY MESSAGES

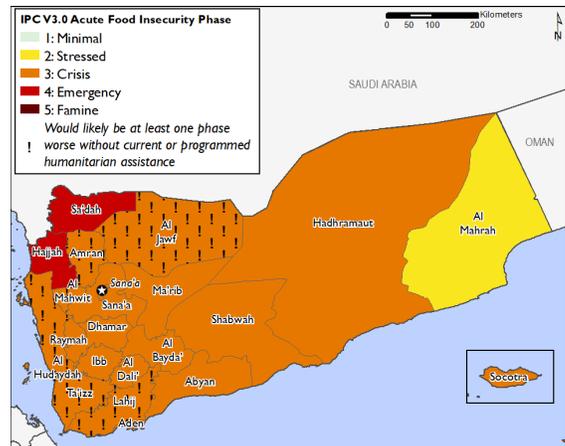
- Approximately 17 million people in Yemen face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity and are in urgent need of humanitarian food assistance. It is expected the scale-up of humanitarian assistance in 2019 has lessened the severity of acute food insecurity in many areas. However, **temporary reductions in food rations nationwide** have restricted a key source of food among many Yemenis. While food rations were expected to return to normal levels in early September, further pipeline breaks may occur in **September or October**.
- Fighting substantially escalated in Aden in early August due to clashes between UAE- and Saudi-backed factions of pro-government forces. Continued conflict in Aden risks increasing displacement, damaging port and airport infrastructure, impeding Central Bank operations, and restricting humanitarian access, in addition to threatening the stability of the surrounding south.
- A risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) persists in Yemen. Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be possible in the event that conflict: 1) significantly disrupts port operations, greatly limiting the country’s capacity to import food, or 2) limits trade flows from the ports to interior markets for a prolonged period of time.

CURRENT SITUATION

High levels of conflict continue across Yemen, particularly in Sa’dah, Al Hudaydah, and Al Dali’. Meanwhile, fighting has substantially escalated in Aden in recent weeks due to clashes between UAE- and Saudi-backed factions of pro-government forces. Continued conflict in Aden risks increasing displacement, damaging port and airport infrastructure, impeding Central Bank operations, and restricting humanitarian access. If the conflict continues to escalate, it could threaten the stability of the surrounding south.

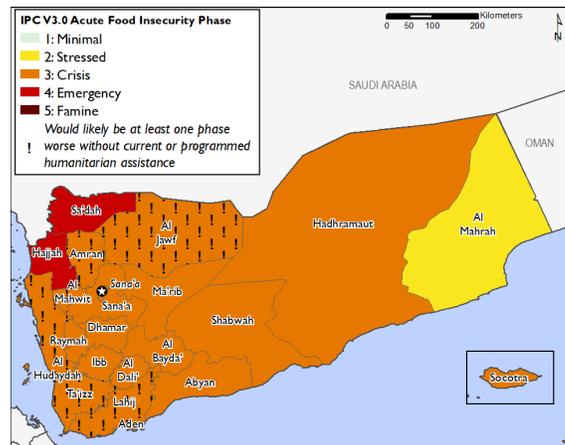
Persistent conflict, including shelling and airstrikes, continues to displace populations in western parts of Yemen. According to the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#), over 300,000 people have been displaced between January 1 to July 27, 2019. Of these, 100,000 people were displaced in Hajjah, 59,000 in Al Dali’, and 53,000 in Al Hudaydah. Between July 14 and 27, there were two reported instances of over 100 households being displaced in a single day, both due to conflict in

Projected food security outcomes, August to September 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2019 to January 2020



Source: FEWS NET

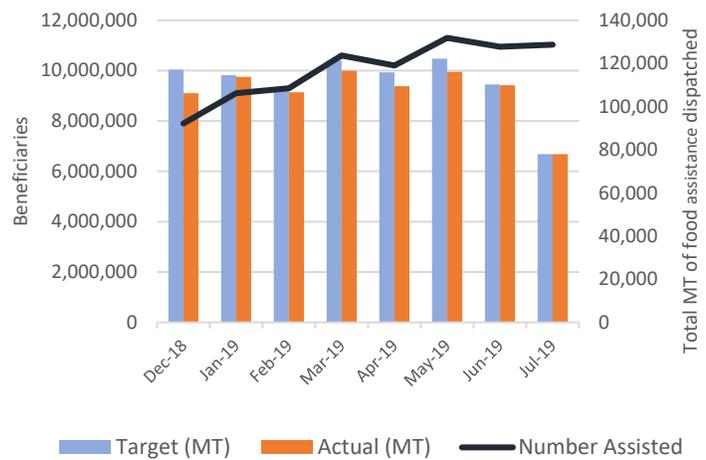
FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

Al Hudaydah. Meanwhile, as of August 27, flash floods continue to displace families and damage infrastructure across Yemen. According to OCHA, widespread flooding beginning in the second week of June has affected an estimated 70,000 people, especially IDPs, and has rendered many roads inaccessible to humanitarian assistance. The most affected governorates are Al Hudaydah, Ta'izz, Al Mahwit, Sana'a, and Ibb.

The delivery of large-scale humanitarian food assistance continues in Yemen; on average, WFP has reached around 10 million people per month in the first half of 2019 (Figure 1). This is a notable increase from late 2018, when WFP was reaching roughly 7 million people per month. Additionally, after the suspension of aid in Sana'a City in June 2019, WFP and Sana'a-based authorities reached an agreement in August that will allow WFP to implement a bio-registration system for beneficiaries and re-start the delivery of food aid to Sana'a City. However, it is anticipated that WFP has implemented a temporary reduction in ration sizes for all emergency food assistance beneficiaries in Yemen in July and August. While food rations were expected to return to normal levels in early September, further pipeline breaks may occur in September or October.

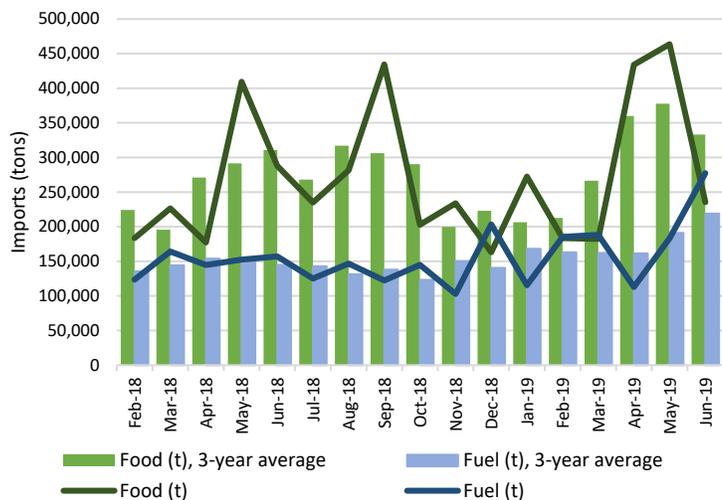
Macroeconomic conditions in Yemen remain extremely poor, marked by depreciation of the local currency, limited income-earning opportunities, and high food prices. As of early August, the exchange rate was on average 580 YER/USD, compared to 575 YER/USD in July. The Central Bank in Aden (CBY) has also recently announced an initiative to combat currency speculation and exchange rate manipulation through an electronic network linking businesses with money exchange institutions, to be launched next year.

Figure 1. Number of beneficiaries reached with humanitarian food assistance and total MT dispatched by WFP



Source: WFP monthly situation reports

Figure 2. Food and fuel imports (monthly import tonnage, and three-year moving average) through Yemen's Red Sea ports



Source: UNVIM

The Red Sea ports of Al Hudaydah and Salif remain open and operational and, according to UNVIM, food imports through these ports between February-July 2019 increased an estimated 13 percent compared to the previous six-month period (August 2018-January 2019). During this comparison period, however, increased conflict in Hudaydah significantly reduced port traffic, causing a dip in food imports (Figure 2). While food imports into the Red Sea ports remain volatile, the three-year moving average suggests that unusually large quantities of food imports have been arriving through these ports in recent months, as compared to the past 18 months. Imports through the Red Sea ports have not reportedly been affected by recent conflict in Aden. However, there are mounting concerns should the Central Bank in Aden be forced to close and suspend issuing letters of credit to importers of essential goods, including food, fuel, and medicine.

While comparable data on current food imports through the port of Aden are not available, FleetMon data show that the number of cargo vessels arriving into the port of Aden rose between January and March/April 2019 before falling in June 2019 (Figure 3)—a similar trend to that observed in food imports through the Red Sea ports. These trends observed support the idea that food imports have generally risen to unusually high levels in recent months, before beginning to dip again around

June. With the WFP importing over 100,000 MT of food per month, a significant proportion of these imports are intended for humanitarian assistance rather than markets.

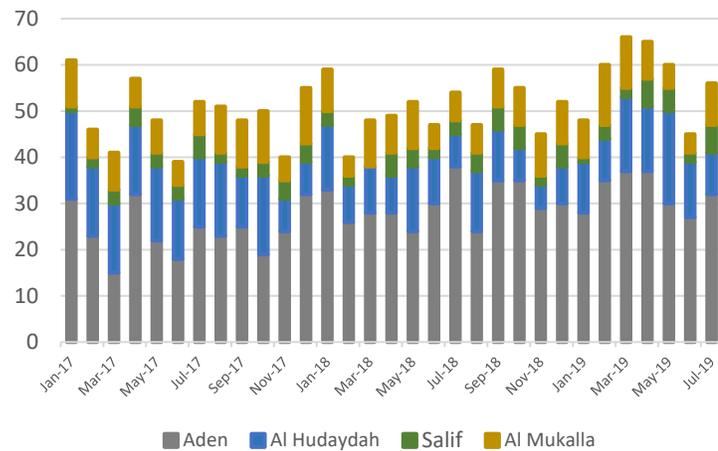
Fuel imports through the Red Sea ports, meanwhile, increased an estimated 37 percent between February-July 2019 compared to the previous six-month period (August 2018-January 2019), according to UNVIM. In July 2019, fuel imports through the Red Sea ports of Al Hudaydah and Salif decreased by 30 percent compared to levels observed in June. This followed a steady month-to-month increase in fuel imports through these ports since April, when imports dipped sharply to the lowest levels observed in 2019. Even so, the three-year moving average (Figure 2) illustrates an overall positive trend in fuel imports through these ports since late 2018.

While data on recent fuel imports through the port of Aden remain unavailable, FleetMon data also show an overall increase in cargo vessel traffic from late 2018 through March/April 2019. However, cargo vessel traffic decreased through June 2019, with a sharp uptick in July. This is the reverse of the trend observed in fuel imports; this likely reflects the fact that fuel imports represent a smaller proportion of total cargo vessel capacity compared to other commodities, such as food. As such, fuel import data correlate less closely with vessel arrivals.

Within Yemen, road access remains difficult in many areas, but improved around Sana'a in mid-August 2019. According to the [Yemen Logistics Cluster Access Constraints map](#) published on August 26, most roads surrounding Sana'a continue to be open—some for the first time since December 2017. Large stretches of main roads in southeastern Yemen, however, have become inaccessible. This includes the major roads connecting the port of Mukalla to western Yemen, raising concerns about further restricted food and fuel supplies. While there has been some improvement in road access in northwestern and southwestern Yemen, many main roads remain closed or difficult to access, and most of the main roads from Al Buq' to Al Hazam are now closed. Similarly, some road access has improved between Ibb and Al Dali' governorates, but sections of road leading to Al Dali's capital remain closed.

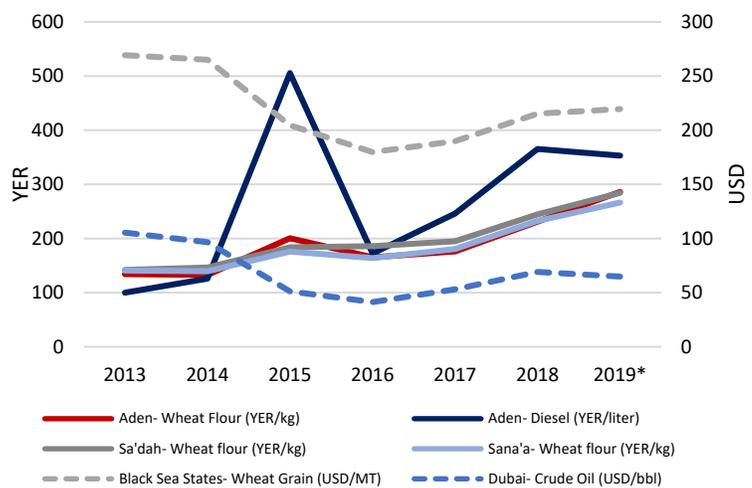
Wheat flour prices have remained generally stable in recent months at well above-average levels across most markets in Yemen. According to WFP price monitoring in July 2019, wheat flour prices were approximately 250 YER/kg in the key markets of Al Hudaydah, Sana'a City, and Aden. These prices are comparable to those observed in recent months, but remain approximately 25 percent higher than those observed in July 2018 in Sana'a City and Aden. In Al Hudaydah, prices are approximately 12 percent lower than July 2018, but all prices remain substantially higher than pre-conflict levels (approximately 82 percent higher in these markets).

Figure 3. Number of cargo vessel arrivals per month, by port



Source: FleetMon

Figure 4. Average annual Yemen and international price trends, 2013-2019



Source: FEWS NET/World Bank/WFP

After spiking in April 2019 due to restricted supply, fuel prices declined to near March 2019 levels in May and June. As of June 2019, diesel prices were on average 430 YER/L in Al Hudaydah and Sana'a and 363.8 YER/L in Aden according to WFP price monitoring data. Compared to June 2018, prices were 17-19 percent higher in Al Hudaydah and Sana'a and 11 percent higher in Aden. Prices of petrol were the same in June 2019 compared to the previous month in these key markets (374 YER/L in Al Hudaydah, 365 YER/L in Sana'a, and 323 YER/L in Aden). Fuel prices remain more than double pre-conflict levels, which continues to strain typical livelihood activities and put upward pressure on food prices through higher transportation costs.

In early to mid-2019, heavy rainfall has supported the breeding and development of desert locusts, which have been reported in several areas of Yemen, including in Sana'a, Ma'rib, Shabwah, northern Hudaydah, and southern coastal areas. Two swarms of locusts have passed through Sana'a and the surrounding region in the past two months, with another expected in late August. The locusts threaten crop production; total crop losses have not been estimated, but farmers north of Sana'a in Hamdan, Khawlan, and Bani Al have reported crop damage. In addition to this, some [media outlets report](#) that the locusts are providing an additional source of food for many Yemenis in Sana'a city, and likely in the surrounding areas.

High numbers of cholera cases continue to be reported. After peaking in early April at around 30,000 suspected cases per week, the trend has been fluctuating. In late June 2019, nearly 22,000 suspected cases of cholera were reported, while 18,00 suspected cases were reported in late July. Since January 2019, approximately 4.9 percent of the total samples tested have been confirmed. While there has been an increase in resources devoted to combating and treating the disease, underlying conditions for the spread of cholera persist. Governorates with the highest reported caseloads in 2019 are Amanat Al Asimah (67,519), Sana'a (54,844), Al Hudaydah (51,139), Hajjah (42,762), Ibb (41,183), and Dhamar (40,279). Although the reported caseload in the first half of 2019 is concerning and notably higher than the same time period in 2018, reported cases remain well below the peak of the cholera outbreak in 2017.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the period of June 2019 to January 2020 remain unchanged, except for the following:

- Continued elevated tension and conflict are likely in Aden. It remains FEWS NET's most likely scenario that trade operations through Aden port will continue at current levels, though the uptick in conflict increases concerns that trade disruptions could occur.
- According to the Logistics Cluster's most recent access constraints map, roads are now largely open around Sana'a, although small sections of many main roads remain closed. Roads around Sana'a have not been this clear since December 2017.
- Locusts threaten to reduce agricultural production in some areas of Yemen, particularly in regions around Sana'a. Overall, Yemen does not rely on domestic production for a major share of its staple foods. As such, the current locust outbreak is not likely to substantially impact the availability of key staples, though it is likely to impact production—a key source of food and income for rural farmers—and agricultural labor opportunities in areas where the outbreak is severe.
- Based on forecasts by USGS and NOAA, average rainfall is expected over Yemen through the remainder of the June to September rainy season, though with heavy rainfall in late August according to the GFS short-term forecast, resulting in an increased risk of flooding during this time period.
- Based on current deliveries and levels of planned assistance, humanitarians are expected to continue reaching around 10 million people per month with a 66-100 percent ration. However, temporary ration cuts of 50 percent are expected in July and August due to funding constraints. Normal operations are expected to resume in September.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2020

Throughout the projection period, humanitarian food assistance will likely continue, and resume in Sana'a City. Despite the temporary reduction in transfer sizes, rations are still expected to be significant. This source of food and income is therefore likely to prevent more severe outcomes in many areas of the country. Even so, large areas will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while Hajjah and Sa'ada will remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Harvests will be available during this time in the Central Highlands and the Eastern Plateau zones, though the impact on nation-wide food security outcomes will be minimal, given

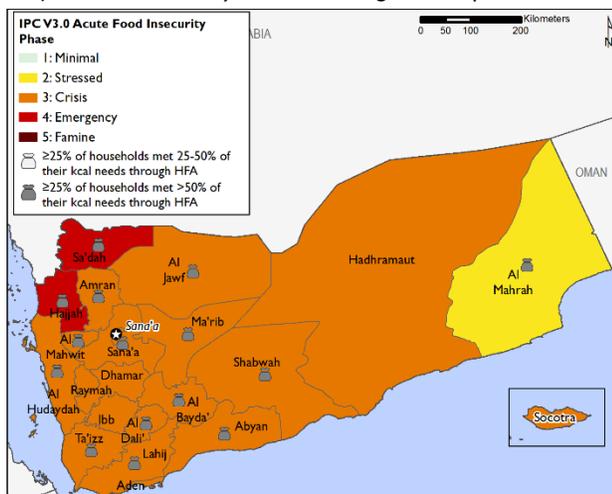
the small-scale nature of cereal production in Yemen. Furthermore, harvests are expected to be below average given lack of availability of and/or access to inputs, limited access to crop fields in conflict zones, and the negative impact of locusts in some areas. Overall food access will remain low given limited income-earning opportunities and extremely high food prices. Additionally, high disease incidence will negatively impact food utilization among many Yemenis.

In the event of significant declines in commercial imports below requirement levels and a prolonged, sustained disruption to imports through Al Hudaydah and Salif ports, Yemen would face a risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5), given that the other ports in Yemen have limited offload and storage capacity and that the potential for overland trade is extremely low. The prospect of collapse of the peace agreement of Al Hudaydah and increased conflict that could damage facilities at Al Hudaydah and Salif ports is also very concerning. Tension and insecurity are expected to persist in Aden at least in the near term and continued conflict threatens damage to port and airport infrastructure, disrupting regular trade flows. Although it remains FEWS NET’s most likely scenario that imports will continue at current levels through Aden port, disruption would likely very quickly result in higher food and non-food commodity prices in the south, as well as possibly in higher-population northern areas like Sana’a. For the governorates already likely to be in Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!), this would increase the risk of more extreme outcomes including Famine (IPC Phase 5), particularly if the disruption persists for a 3-4 months or longer.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

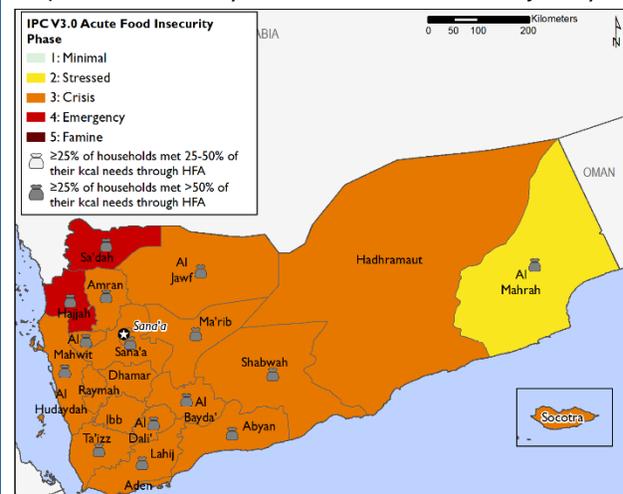
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☺ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☹ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, August to September 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2019 to January 2020



Source: FEWS NET

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ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).