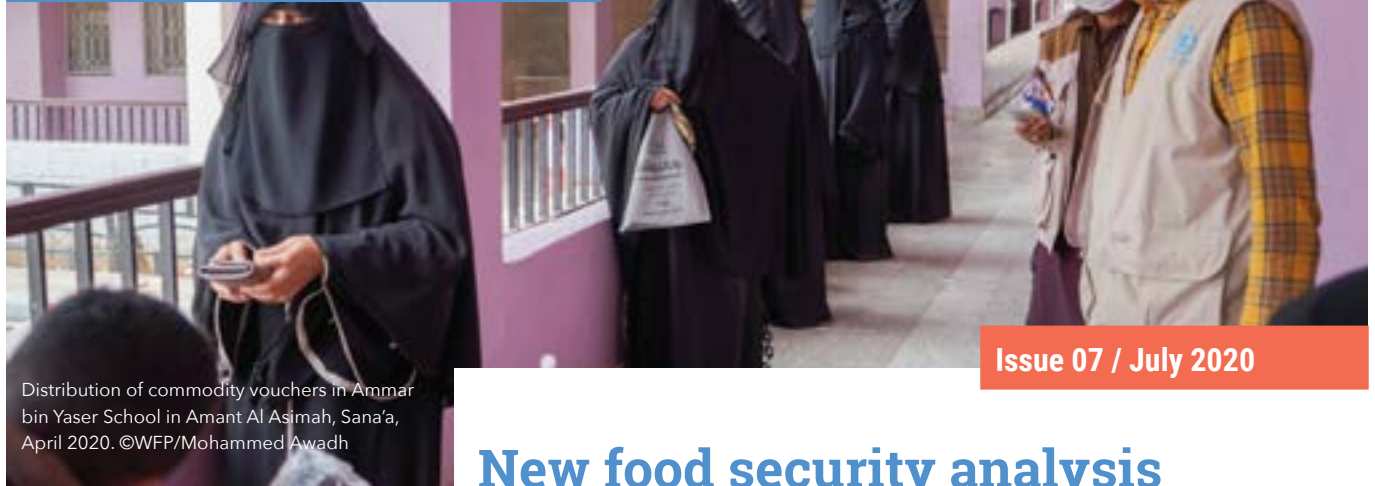


# HUMANITARIAN UPDATE



Distribution of commodity vouchers in Ammar bin Yaser School in Amant Al Asimah, Sana'a, April 2020. ©WFP/Mohammed Awadh

Issue 07 / July 2020

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OCHA

YEMEN

## New food security analysis forecasts an alarming increase in the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity by end of 2020

A new Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released by the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on 22 July, warns that economic shocks, conflict, floods, locusts and COVID-19 could reverse food security gains in Yemen. The report, which analyzes the situation of 7.9 million people in 133 districts in southern governorates, forecasts an alarming increase in the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and IPC Phase 4), from 2 million (25 per cent of the population) to 3.2 million (40 per cent of the population) in the next six months, even if existing levels of food assistance are maintained. This would reverse improvements made since the 2018/2019 IPC analysis, when more than half a million people moved below IPC Phase 3, primarily because of a huge scale-up of humanitarian food assistance.

"The IPC is telling us that Yemen is again on the brink of a major food security crisis," said Ms. Lise

Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen. "Eighteen months ago, when we faced a similar situation, we were generously funded. We used the resources we were entrusted with wisely and massively scaled-up assistance in the districts where people were the hungriest and most at risk. The result was tremendous. We prevented famine. Unless we receive the funding we need now, we won't be able to do the same this time."

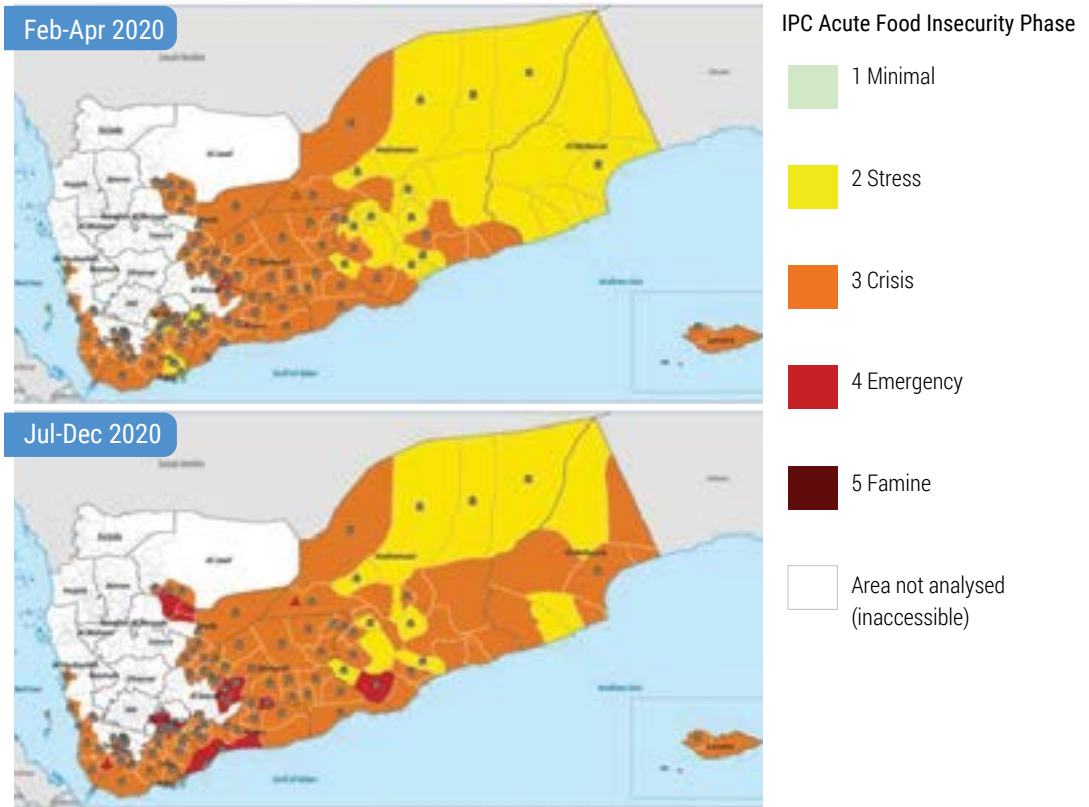
Food insecurity is high in areas characterized by fighting, which leads to access restrictions for humanitarian food assistance and to markets, and causes constant population displacements. In terms of severity, the 16 worst affected districts, in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), are located in 8 governorates: Al Dhale'e (3), Marib (3), Al Bayda (2), Shabwah (2), Abyan (2), Taizz (2), Al Jawf (1) and Hadramaut (1). In terms of magnitude, the governorates with the highest numbers of people in crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) are Taizz (590,000), Lahj (487,500)

and Hadramaut (465,500). The increase in people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above is concentrated in the six governorates: Abyan, Aden, Al Dhale'e, Hadramaut, Lahj and Taizz, where 83 per cent of the increase is forecast.

The analysis proposes recommendations for urgent action, including continued and

unhindered food assistance; protecting the livelihoods of populations most at risk; supporting the rehabilitation of water infrastructures damaged by floods; promoting good nutritional practices; and strengthening early warning and general food security monitoring.

## IPC classification in southern governorates



Source: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July – December 2020

## Funding shortage closes life-saving programmes as humanitarian needs rise

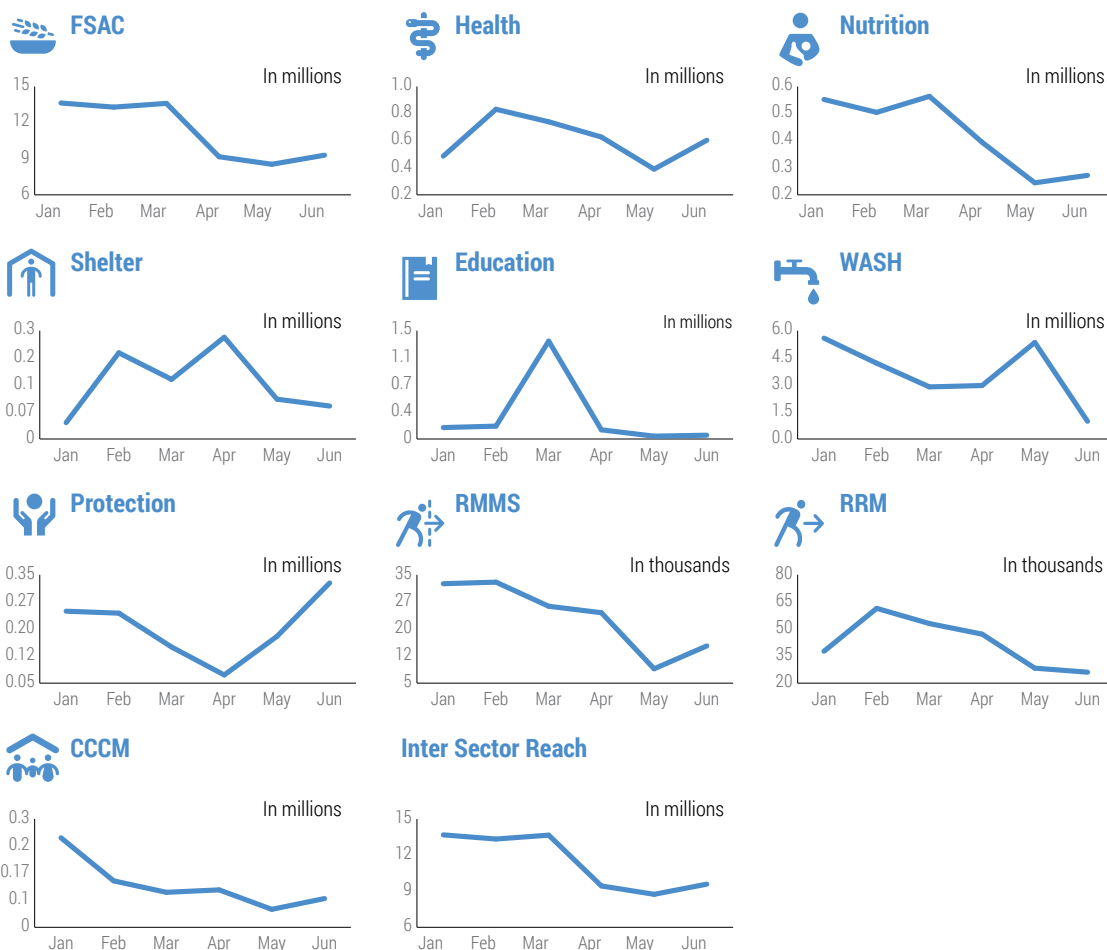
In his opening remarks to the UN Security Council on 28 July, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr. Mark Lowcock, warned members, “The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has never been worse”, highlighting increasing needs – including hunger and COVID-19 – escalating conflict, and a collapsing economy. Another major contributory factor to the current dire humanitarian situation is the huge funding shortage for the aid operation, “Humanitarian agencies are again nearly broke”, the ERC said. More than US\$3.2 billion is required for the humanitarian response in Yemen in 2020. At a High-Level Pledging Event in Riyadh held on 2 June, donors pledged only \$1.35 billion of the \$2.41 billion needed to cover essential humanitarian activities between June and December of 2020, leaving a gap of more than \$1 billion. With only around \$650 million of the \$1.35 billion pledged received by the end of July, the aid operation in Yemen is teetering on the

brink of collapse.

COVID-19, continuing conflict and the deteriorating economy are driving more people into poverty and acute need. But, instead of ramping up assistance, aid organizations are having to close or substantially downsize life-saving assistance programmes due to a lack of funding, with grave ramifications for millions of Yemenis who rely on humanitarian assistance for survival.

In April, food assistance was reduced in northern governorates from full rations every month to full rations every other month, cutting assistance to 9 million people by half. Further reductions are expected in both northern and southern governorates by November, affecting another 5 million people and further eroding food security. Families in IPC 4 who are a step away from famine – those who are in emergency conditions and

## People reached by cluster in first half of 2020



Source: Clusters

experiencing large food consumption gaps – will be in danger of sliding into IPC 5 – catastrophic/famine conditions – and facing an extreme lack of food and possibly starvation.

In April, provision of the Minimum Service Package (MSP) – a health delivery mechanism that strengthens access to health care services, including preventative services that reduce the risk of the transmission of deadly diseases including cholera – was stopped in seven governorates, depriving 1.3 million people of access to life-saving care. In addition, payment of incentives to more than 1,800 medical and paramedical staff delivering the Minimum Initial Service Package for reproductive health, was stopped in 130 health facilities, affecting at least 2 million people, including 265,000 women and girls in need of reproductive health services. Moreover, incentive payments to 110 emergency medical teams that distribute essential supplies, including trauma kits, to 110 health facilities were halted in April and May, putting 1.6 million people at a higher risk of dying due to a lack of surgical services. Incentive payments for 4,000 health workers supporting preparedness and response were also stopped in April, affecting 18 million people.

Further, IOM-supported health services in 51 facilities in the north were halted in April, with

services in another 10 health facilities in the south stopped in July, depriving 1.8 million people of regular access to health care services. Reproductive health services and allowances for health workers in 140 health facilities were stopped in May, depriving another 1.5 million women and girls of reproductive health services, including 36,000 at risk of facing complications during pregnancy and delivery.

In June, the distribution of fishing kits and rehabilitation of fishing landing sites for 172,000 fisher folk in IPC 3 and IPC 4 districts were stopped. Support to farmers through livestock vaccination programmes is expected to end in August.

In addition, 4.7 million people, including 2.5 million people living in cholera hotspots, stand to lose regular access to safe drinking water if no additional funding is received by the end of July, putting people in 15 major cities at heightened risk of dying of cholera and other waterborne diseases.

If no funding is received in August, the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) – an immediate relief package given to newly displaced people within 72 hours of displacement – will be halted, leaving 840,000 newly displaced persons without life-saving supplies. Similarly, the distribution of hygiene kits to newly displaced persons within 72 hours of displacement

will stop, putting 300,000 people at a heightened risk of contracting deadly waterborne diseases. Furthermore, 70 per cent of migrant assistance services including specialized protection services, migrant service centres and return programmes will be drastically reduced, affecting 100,000 destitute and highly vulnerable migrants. Specialized services for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors in 29 safe spaces and 4 specialized psychological centres will

stop in August, depriving 350,000 people of these services and, 40,000 highly vulnerable people will lose access to psychological services.

Finally, without urgent funding, allocations from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, will be drastically reduced, significantly weakening the capacity of partners to respond to emerging life-saving priorities and gaps.

## COVID-19 strategy refreshed as COVID-19 continues to spread across Yemen

By 31 July 2020, 1,732 confirmed cases of COVID-19 had been reported with 494 deaths and 864 recoveries, up by 570 cases from 1,162 cases reported at the end of June, with 313 deaths and 490 recoveries. The highest number of cases and deaths were reported in Hadramaut followed by Taizz. A high number of cases have also been reported in Aden with a lower death rate and higher recovery rate.

Reports continue to indicate that more people are symptomatic and are dying with COVID-like symptoms, though precautionary measures have been eased in many areas. Health partners remain concerned that there has been under-reporting for a variety of reasons including a shortage of testing facilities, difficulties in accessing health care, fear of stigma, the perceived risks of seeking treatment, and a lack of official reporting. While there have recently been fewer indications of severe and critical cases, health professionals are very concerned that people who are asymptomatic continue to transmit the virus, and urge communities to observe preventative measures including maintaining physical distancing, wearing masks, reinforcing cough etiquette and

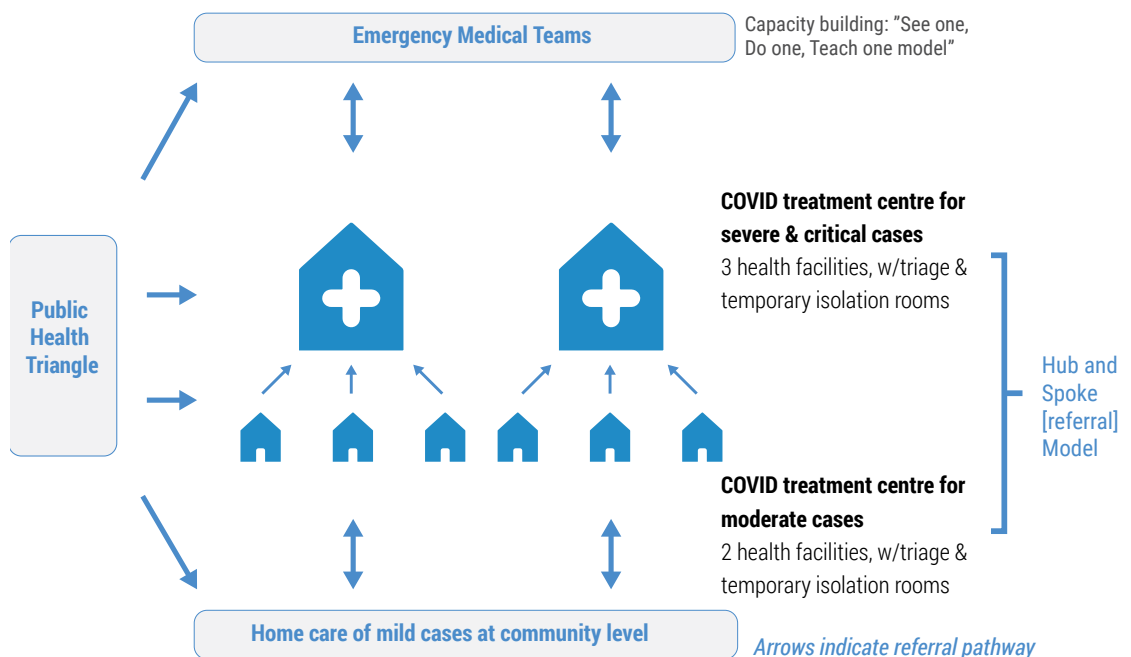
hand hygiene, avoiding crowds, and staying home if people are sick.

During July, the COVID-19 strategy was refreshed in line with the phase the pandemic has reached in Yemen and the response now focuses on testing, surveillance and case management. Current priorities centre on triage - to keep patients and healthcare workers safe; referral pathways and capacity building. Procuring and distributing oxygen and personal protective equipment remains a priority.

Meanwhile, partners continue to work towards procuring COVID-19 supplies. By the end of July, 11,380 metric tons (MT) of COVID-19 supplies were available in country compared with 9,221 MT at the end of June, and 2,938 MT were in the pipeline.

Initiatives to address the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 are underway, including UNDP's Rapid Response Facility that aims to work with the authorities to generate income opportunities through humanitarian and development responses, focusing on strengthening public health systems and generating livelihood opportunities for vulnerable

### Referral pathways employed in the COVID-19 response



populations affected by COVID -19.

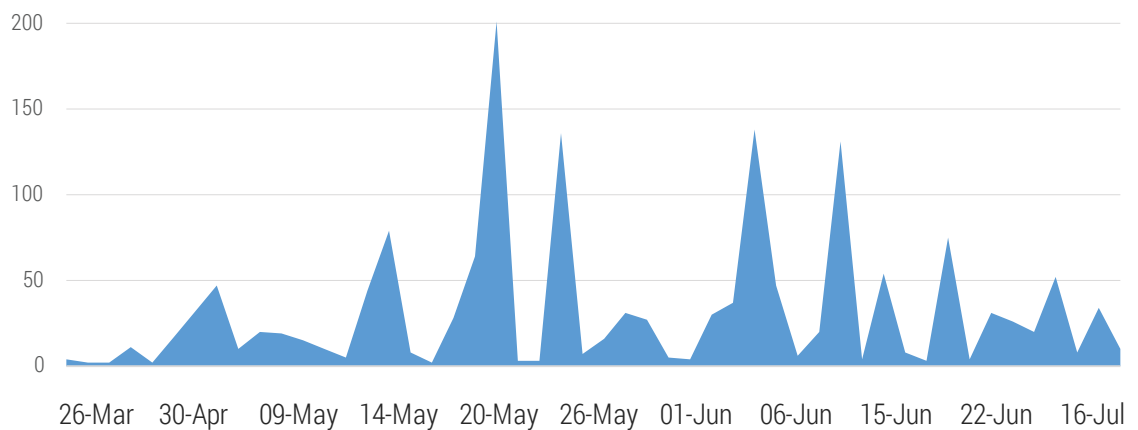
## COVID-19 displacement in southern governorates

In late March, COVID-19 was identified as cause of displacement from Aden and surrounding areas to more rural areas. IOM documented the movement of at least 1,592 families from Aden between 26 March, and 9 July, who indicated that they were afraid of contracting the virus and about poor access to treatment. Partners reported that deteriorating services, including electricity and water, after the outbreak of COVID-19 and heavy rains in March and April, coupled with high summer temperatures, were secondary reasons for the displacement.

Numbers peaked between mid-May and mid-June, overtaking conflict-induced displacement across the country, though the latest figures from July indicate that COVID-19 movements are slowing.

IOM reported that 77 per cent of all COVID-19 displacement was from Aden Governorate, and another 13 per cent were displaced from Lahj, particularly from areas close to Aden City. Areas of destination were mainly mountainous, remote and sparsely populated areas around northern Lahj, north-western Abyan and southern Al Dhale'e where many families have homes (52 per cent of all COVID-19 displacement) or stay with host families (45 per cent). A very small number moved to displacement sites, suggesting that those who moved generally had the means to support themselves.

## COVID-19 displacement in southern governorates 26 March – 16 July



Source: IOM

## Fuel crisis is another shock to the humanitarian situation in northern governorates

A fuel crisis that hit northern governorates in June – the result of a dispute between the parties to the conflict which has resulted in a blockade of incoming fuel vessels to Al Hudaydah port – is another shock to the humanitarian situation. The ensuing fuel shortage has led to skyrocketing fuel costs in the informal market, long queues at petrol stations, and inflated costs for water, transport and some goods. By mid-June, fuel imports had reached a historic low and the impact of the shortage and spiraling costs were extending across the humanitarian response, causing a reduction and suspension of some aid programmes.

In the Ibb hub, public transport, commercial water trucking, and commercial electricity have been badly affected by the fuel crisis. By 23 July, the WASH response for an estimated 258,771 families had been reduced or suspended, and all public water provision was reportedly at risk of suspension if no fuel arrived before the end of July, forcing people to buy from private wells where prices in some area have already trebled. The cost of transport for beneficiaries, supplies and workers has threatened other

programmes. Protection services for 41,515 families have been cut back, women's protection services in safe spaces and outreach services in four districts of Ibb, Taizz, and Lahj have been suspended, and child protection services for another 13,054 families have been reduced. Food assistance for 24,696 families was delayed due to difficulties transporting supplies and beneficiaries unable to reach distribution points; shelter support has been reduced in 10 districts in Taizz, Ibb and Ad Dhale'e affecting more than 22,600 families; and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Sub-Cluster delayed infrastructure maintenance in 10 districts in Taizz and Ibb affecting 9,739 families. Support for health services was cut back, including to four hospitals in Taizz. Partners have been unable to provide a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) response in 12 districts in Taizz and Al Dhale'e and have suspended RRM activities in in Juban and Ad Damt districts in Al Dhale'e which together has affected 900 families.

Similar situations exist in other hub areas. In the Al Hudaydah hub, food and water provision are worst affected. By 23 July, 6,681 families were unable to

## Official fuel prices compared with unregulated fuel prices by governorate as of 29 July 2020

	Average official price for 20 litres (20 litres)	Sana'a - unofficial price for (20 litres)	Ibb - unofficial price (20 litres)	Al Hudaydah - unofficial price (20 litres)	Sa'ada -unofficial price (20 litres)	Al Jawf- unofficial price (20 litres)
 <b>Petrol</b>	YER5,900	YER11,000	YER13,000 - 13,400	YER12,000	YER10,500 - 15,000	YER12,000 - 15,000
 <b>Diesel</b>	YER6,900	YER16,000	YER14,000	YER12,000	YER10,000 - 15,000	YER9,500 - 12,000
 <b>Cooking gas</b>	YER2,750 - 4,000	YER12,000	YER8,000	YER12,000	YER8,500 - 10,000	YER8,000 - 10,000

YER: Yemeni rials; the unofficial exchange rate is about YER600/US\$. Source: OCHA

reach food distribution points due to the lack of or high cost of transport in five districts in Hajjah Governorate and in Al Zuhra District in Al Hudaydah Governorate. The local water authority had reduced or suspended water supplies for over 3,000 families in Hajjah and another 3,000 families in Al Hudaydah and the Shelter Sub-Cluster cut back the distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter kits (ESK) for 3,452 families in Hajjah.

In the Sana'a hub, food distributions, water and protection services have been badly hit. At the start of July, a supplier was unable to deliver food baskets to a partner that provides food baskets to 6,450 displaced, vulnerable and flood-affected host families in Marib City. The Protection Cluster has suspended the distribution of hygiene kits to 150 families in Sana'a City and school rehabilitation projects have stopped across the governorate. Livelihoods training that rely on generators – including for the production of masks and hygiene kits – psychosocial support in safe spaces, and COVID-19 risk communication in IDP sites, have been reduced or suspended. Water trucking has been limited in a Dhamar IDP site; 23 health facilities across the hub have shortened working hours due to a lack of power and transport difficulties for patients, workers and medical supplies; and reproductive health services have been cut back in Sirwah District and at Al Thawrah Hospital in Al Bayda.

In Sa'ada, some water projects are now relying on solar energy and operating at about 50 per cent

capacity, though UNICEF has provided fuel to the water authority to try to keep supplies going. In Al Jawf, where over 90 per cent of water projects do not have solar power, at least 70,000 families (about 75 per cent of the population) have faced a reduction in water supplies, including about 2,900 displaced families scattered in remote settlements that rely on water trucking. Immunization programmes have been hit as over 90 per cent of cold chain operate off gas. Programmes that require frequent movements of humanitarians and/or beneficiaries, including protection assistance, risk communications, IDP tracking, needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation have all been affected, including the RRM. Some 16,300 families in Sa'ada and Al Jawf desperately need Shelter assistance and NFIs but needs assessment and verification have been difficult. Fewer supervisory field visits have been possible in Al Jawf which threatens food and voucher distribution to 30,760 families in the longer term. Transport costs for supplies have almost doubled, threatening other distribution activities.

If the fuel crisis continues, there is a serious risk that more services and programmes will reduce or shut down, including healthcare, WASH, transport, protection, telecommunications, and food and agriculture, with the potential to put hundreds of thousands of lives at risk.

## Hopes of a UN assessment mission to avert a catastrophic oil spill from the Safer tanker falter

On 27 May, a sea water spill into the engine room of the decaying oil storage vessel FSO Safer, moored off Yemen's west coast about 60 kilometres north of Al Hudaydah port, brought the possibility of disastrous oil spill closer. Divers were able to undertake emergency repair work. Safer holds an estimated 1.148 million barrels of Marib light crude oil and has not been maintained since Ansar Allah took control of the vessel in 2015.

At a closed session of the Security Council on 15 July, ERC, Mr. Mark Lowcock, and USG and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Inger Andersen, briefed members on the increasing threat posed by the tanker. "Time is running out for us to act in a coordinated manner to prevent a looming environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe," said Ms. Andersen, indicating that an assessment of the condition of the tanker was urgently needed.

Not only are Red Sea ecosystems and the livelihoods of 28 million people at stake, but an oil spill could aggravate the security situation as resources become polluted and contested. Experts forecast that in the worst-case scenario, an oil spill or an explosion would damage 100 per cent of fisheries along Yemen's Red Sea coast within days – 1.6 million Yemenis would be directly affected and every fishing community along Yemen's west coast – where about 90 per cent of people already need humanitarian assistance – would

see their livelihoods collapse. Al Hudaydah port could close for five or six months, triggering a 200 per cent leap in fuel prices for several months and food prices would likely double. An explosion and fire on board would expose 8.4 million people to harmful pollutants. Other countries bordering the Red Sea – including Djibouti, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia – would be affected, as well as the passage of more than 20,000 ships through the Red Sea annually.

Mr. Lowcock, who has repeatedly briefed Security Council members on the threats posed by the tanker over the past 16 months, indicated on 15 July, that in a positive move the Ansar Allah authorities had indicated that they would allow a UN mission to assess the tanker. He added that Member States were finalizing funding to pay for the mission which could deploy within weeks and would include an assessment and any initial repair work possible. The ERC expressed hope that the authorities would allow the mission to go ahead, "The Ansar Allah authorities have an important opportunity here to take steps that will spare millions of their fellow citizens from yet another tragedy". However, in his briefing to the Security Council a fortnight later, on 28 July, Mr. Lowcock reported that there had been no further progress.



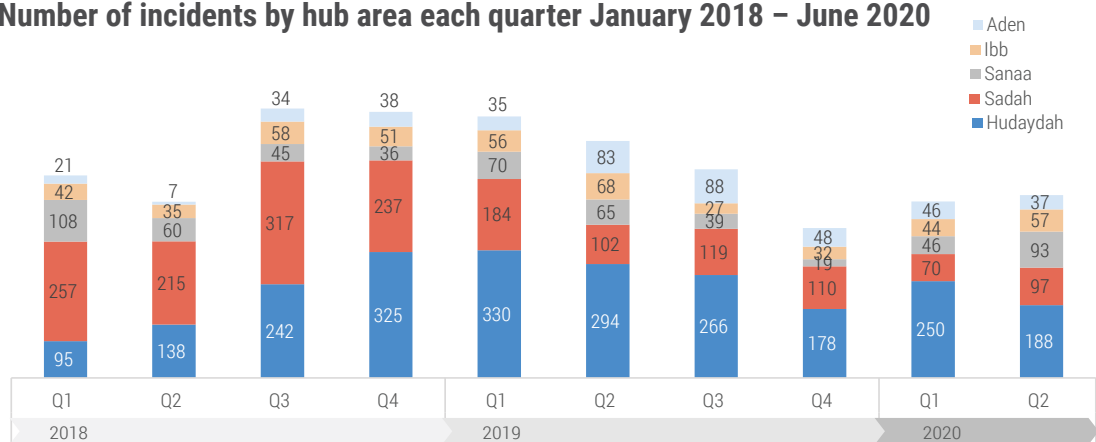
An oil spill from Safer would destroy fishing communities on Yemen's west coast. © FAO

## Air strikes causing civilian casualties double in the second quarter of 2020

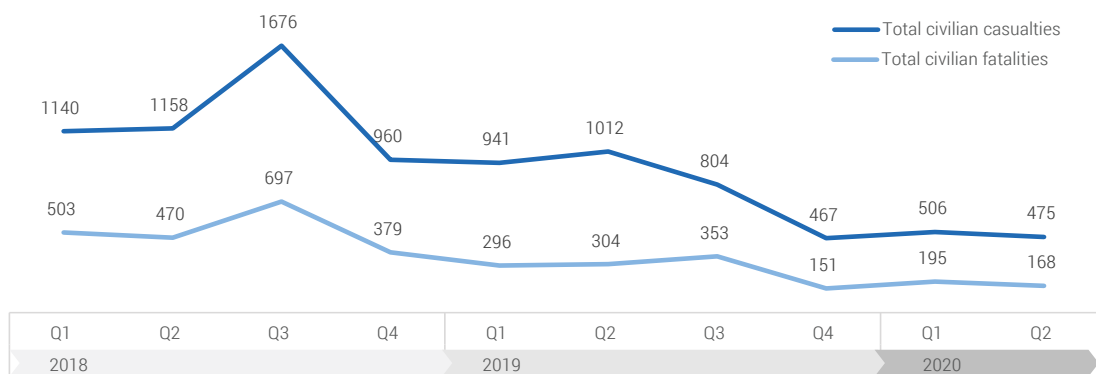
Despite repeated calls for a ceasefire from the international community, fighting continued throughout the second quarter of 2020 and into July. There are now 43 active frontlines across the country compared with 38 at the start of the year. Fighting continues to kill and injure civilians and to damage homes and civilian infrastructure, with no major changes in the overall number of civilian casualties. The Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) recorded 472 incidents with a direct impact on civilians in quarter 2, up from 456 in the previous quarter, and 475 civilian casualties (168 fatalities and 307 injured), a slight reduction from the 506 reported in the previous quarter. The number of air strikes causing civilian casualties and damaging civilian infrastructure doubled from 44 to 88

between the first and second quarters of the year, despite a unilateral ceasefire declared by Saudi Arabia covering most of April and May. Casualties caused by landmines increased from 49 to 68, including 37 fatalities. More houses were reported damaged or destroyed by fighting in the second quarter than in the first quarter of 2020 – 1,369 houses, up from 1,121. The number of health facilities reported damaged in armed violence increased from 6 to 9, restricting access to medical services for an estimated 127,222 families, and the number of incidents in which telecommunications infrastructure was damaged rose from 5 to 9. The highest number of civilian casualties recorded across the three-month period was again in Al Hudaydah.

Number of incidents by hub area each quarter January 2018 – June 2020



Number of civilian casualties by each quarter January 2018 – June 2020



Source: CIMP

### Humanitarian Coordinator condemns incidents that killed and injured children and women

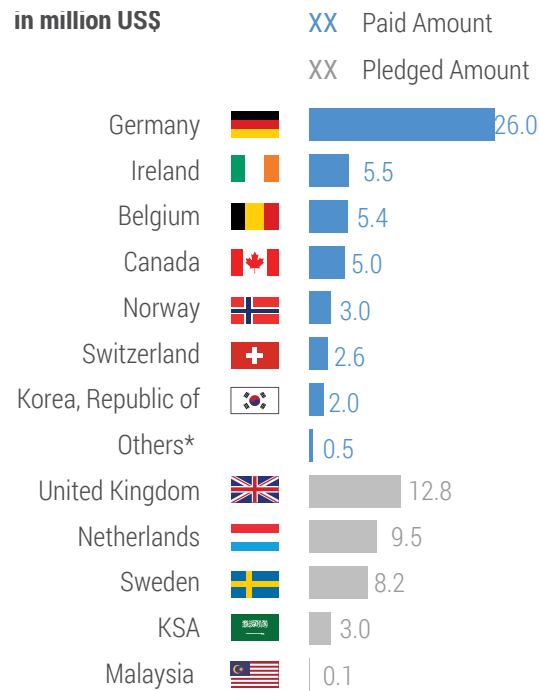
The first half of July was marked by more mass casualty incidents. These included an air strike on Washhah District in Hajjah Governorate on 12 July which initial reports indicated killed seven children and two women and injured another two children and two women. “Yemen can’t take much more”, said Ms. Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen in a statement condemning the incident. “There isn’t

enough funding, health and water programmes are shutting, famine is stalking the country again, and people all across the country are being hit by COVID.” Just three days later, on 15 July, field reports indicated that strikes killed at least 11 civilians, including women and children, and injured at least another 5 children and a woman in the Al Musaafah Al Maraziq area, east of Al Hazm in Al Jawf in northern Yemen. “The only way civilians will be safe in Yemen is when the parties finally decide to stop fighting” said Ms. Grande in a second statement. “Humanitarians have been calling for a comprehensive cease-fire for a long-time. The only chance for Yemen is if the parties take that step.”



# Yemen Humanitarian Fund faces a large reduction in donor contributions

## YHF donor contributions as of July 2020

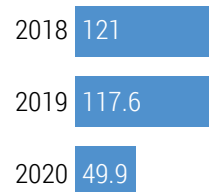


\*Other: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Jersey, Lithuania, Malta

By the end of July 2020, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) was facing severe funding shortages, with more than a two-fold reduction in donor contributions compared with the same time last year. While almost \$50 million in generous donor contributions has so far been provided in 2020, the fund received over \$117 million by July last year and \$30 million has yet to be paid by some of the YHF's top donors. The lack of funding dramatically reduces the YHF's capacity to support front-line partners, especially NGOs. It also delays possible allocations at a time when major humanitarian programmes are facing closure or extensive reductions.

So far in 2020, the YHF has allocated \$3.5 million to WFP through a reserve allocation in April to support UNHAS services. There are currently 95 projects worth to \$150.8 million being implemented.

## Overall donor contributions by July in million US\$



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