

YEMEN

4 - 17 August 2017

KEY FIGURES

20.7 million

people in need

[Source: OCHA 31 April 2017]

1,980,510

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

81 percentage of IDPs displaced for more than a year

946,044 IDP returnees

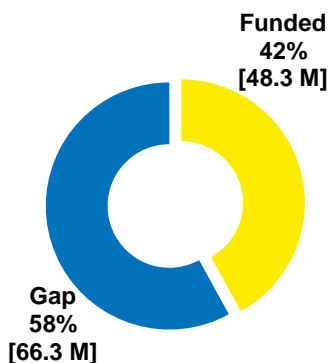
865,121 recipients of NFIs since March 2015

280,421 refugees and asylum seekers

Funding

USD **114.6 M**

requested in 2017



Operational Update

UNHCR is saddened by the two tragic incidents off the coast of Yemen's Shabwah Governorate, in which scores of refugees and migrants were feared to have drowned. UNHCR has warned repeatedly of the risks involved in dangerous boat crossings to Yemen, as prolonged conflict and insecurity have created the conditions for the proliferation of smuggling and trafficking by criminal networks targeting and exploiting people who are fleeing persecution or poverty. More than 30,000 people have made their way to Yemen through the Gulf of Aden or across the Red Sea in the first half of 2017 alone.

The UNHCR-led Protection Cluster released an update in August which emphasizes the impact of the conflict on civilians, notably through three major incidents resulting in civilian casualties. The update highlights that 104,658 internally displaced persons (IDP) were newly displaced in 2017 as a result of ongoing conflict, and that through the first half of 2017, the average number of reported airstrikes per month is almost three times higher compared to 2016, while the pace of reported armed clashes in 2017 is also 56% higher per month in 2017. Civilians in Yemen continue to bear the brunt of the crisis as conflict prolongs and escalates, further compounded by cholera and widespread food insecurity, all of which has only served to increase the protection needs of an already vulnerable population.

IDP Response



Rental subsidies for vulnerable cases reach families across Yemen. Photo: UNHCR/ S Mantoo.

UNHCR has completed a substantial effort to reach 9,200 IDP and IDP returnee families with rental subsidies. The financial support, with a value of USD 300, has directly helped 64,400 people across Yemen, including in Sana'a, Sa'ada, Hajjah, Amran, Dhamar, Ibb, Aden, Lahj and Taizz Governorates. Recipient families were identified following home visits, and represent some of the most vulnerable displaced families in Yemen who are at risk of eviction. Recognising the scale of the needs, and bolstered by donor support, UNHCR and partners are now working on reaching a further 10,000 families with rental subsidies by the end of 2017. Providing IDPs with cash enables families to maintain a roof over their heads in a dignified manner and contributes to the local economy. Cash-based interventions also help families avoid resorting to harmful coping strategies, such as survival sex, child labour, family separation and forced marriage.

UNHCR has expanded its response to address the initial needs of IDP returnees in southern governorates, including boosting protection services and improving shelter conditions. The latest figures from the Task Force on Population Movement (TFPM) indicate that half of conflict returnees are located in Aden, Taizz and Lahj Governorates. With 88 per cent of returnees residing in their original homes, UNHCR's housing repair project, implemented by partner Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS), aims to help families repair their war-damaged homes. So far, 992 families have received cash grants for repairs. Home assessments and recommendations have also been conducted for an additional 139 households in Aden, Lahj and Al Dhale Governorates.

Refugee Response

UNHCR has broadened the refugee assistance criteria in order to increase the number of recipients of financial support in northern governorates. The review of the existing criteria was initiated as a matter of urgency to enable more families to benefit from life-saving financial assistance, and reflects the growing needs of Yemen's most vulnerable refugee and asylum seeker population. The prevailing crisis has resulted in more families falling into the vulnerable category, including female headed households, persons living with disabilities, and survivors of sexual and gender based violence among others. As a result, UNHCR has allocated additional resources to expand the cash assistance programme, including the provision of one-off emergency cash assistance in situations of extreme hardship, given the continuous and deepening decline of the country's economic, social and security situation.

As conditions in Yemen worsen, UNHCR is seeking solutions for Somali refugees. UNHCR has initiated an Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme, and is working with IOM, the Yemeni authorities and the Somali Consul, to support refugees' return to Somalia. So far some 729 individuals have been counselled at the Return Helps Desks (RHD) in Basateen and Kharaz camp, receiving information on the return process and the conditions in return locations. Some 647 individuals have confirmed their desire to return to Somalia. The latest analysis from the RHDs, indicates that the majority wish to return due to lack of economic opportunities in Yemen (82%), followed by family reunification reasons (12%).

As the number of suspected cases of cholera surpasses 500,000, with an infection rate of 5,000 people per day, UNHCR is working to confront the epidemic as part of a system-wide response. Early case detection and surveillance, along with referral services are taking place at UNHCR-supported health and community centres in areas with a high concentration of refugees. The UNHCR-led Protection Cluster has also boosted cholera prevention efforts through the community based protection network (CBPN), including training for volunteers. Training is now complete, with volunteers equipped with printed materials and ready to reach out to communities in 25 districts beyond areas with refugee populations. The prevention information activities are expected to begin during the coming days and will take place in public places including mosques, schools, hospitals and markets and are carried out in close coordination with authorities, and WASH and Health Clusters.

Contact: Aoife McDonnell, External Relations Officer, mcdonnell@unhcr.org

For more information, please follow us on Twitter at @UNHCRYemen and on Facebook at UNHCRYemen