

STATEMENT BY THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN YEMEN
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ON THE URGENT NEED FOR FUNDING TO HALT THE SPREAD OF CHOLERA

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Cholera continues to spread at an unprecedented rate throughout Yemen affecting men, women, and children who have for more than two years withstood the consequences of a conflict that is collapsing institutions and social safety nets. With urgency I appeal to United Nations Member States for financial and political support to help avert what is sure to be an additional and devastating blow to Yemen.

In the last three weeks, health authorities have reported over 35,500 suspected cholera cases, a third of whom are children, and 361 associated deaths in 19 of 22 governorates.

Malnutrition and cholera are interconnected; weakened and hungry people are more likely to contract cholera and cholera is more likely to flourish in places where malnutrition exists. Seventeen million people in Yemen are food insecure, including 462,000 children in the grip of acute malnutrition. Seven million people in Yemen face the possibility of famine and now over one hundred thousand people are estimated to be at risk of contracting cholera.

The speed at which cholera is spreading among the population exceeds the capacity of the health system to respond given its weakened state after more than two years of conflict, import restrictions and the lack of regular salary payments to health workers. Hundreds of thousands of people are at a greater risk of dying as they face the 'triple threat' of conflict, starvation and cholera.

Building on their presence in all 22 governorates across the country, national and international humanitarians are valiantly doing everything they can to prevent and treat cholera. However, they are doing so while facing a worst-case scenario - the majority of health care centers are closed, those that are open have limited staff and supplies, water and sanitation services are unable to provide clean water to the population, and humanitarian funds available to cover the existing institutional gaps and thwart the spread of the disease are meager.

Humanitarians are seeking US\$55.4 million to prevent and treat cholera at the national, governorate and community level in the next six months. However, every day that funding is delayed the outbreak affects more people and more resources are needed to control it.

Cholera is preventable and treatable and no life should be lost to this disease. Humanitarians are acting and responding and we now need UN Member States to please help us by providing new funds and by ensuring that all funds pledged during the High Level Pledging Event in Geneva are made effective without delay.