YEMEN

UNHCR FLASH UPDATE
1 June 2017

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

UNHCR is responding to the growing needs of displaced persons as the situation in Yemen continues to worsen, including a marked increase in protection and shelter needs across the country, with food as a priority for displaced and host communities alike. UNHCR is also contributing to the wider cholera response, which to date has seen 52,000 people diagnosed. The epidemic has also claimed the lives of 475 people, a figure likely to increase given the collapse of the public health care system.

Despite the volatile security situation, UNHCR is continuing to meet and support affected communities. Ongoing hostilities between parties to the conflict have intensified, with fighting impacting on humanitarian access and civilian’s safety, and affecting the protection needs of the displaced, recently returned IDPs and refugees.

IDP RESPONSE

UNHCR is stockpiling lifesaving assistance in the event of an upsurge in hostilities along the western coast of Yemen, in Hudaydah. UNHCR and other humanitarian actors are concerned that an intensification of the conflict could lead to large-scale displacement of up to half a million people. Non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter stocks are currently being prepositioned in strategic locations, to meet the emergency needs of those fleeing. The UNHCR Hudaydah warehouse is stocked to assist some 35,000 people.

UNHCR, through partner Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), distributed much needed 3,300 blankets and mattresses to 1,034 families in IDP hosting communities in Taizziya. The total number of individuals displaced within and from the embattled Taizz Governorate has now reached 87,602. Close to 50,000 people were displaced following an escalation in fighting in early 2017. UNHCR has carried out multiple missions to Al Mokha and neighbouring Hudaydah Governorate, and is responding to a clear spike in humanitarian needs. UNHCR has observed IDPs living on the street, some taking shelter on pavements and resorting to negative coping mechanisms including child labour and begging.

In the northern Governorate of Sa’ada, protection monitoring missions took place to the UNHCR-run Al Bena IDP centre. In the past week alone, 3,325 individuals in need approached the centre for support, including for referral to medical services, psychosocial support and legal counselling. NFI assistance reached 3,752 individuals, mainly in the Old City of Sa’ada. Furthermore, UNHCR is looking to support 1,000 families in Sa’ada with rental subsidies, with an assessment underway to target those most vulnerable.

REFUGEE RESPONSE

Recognising the worsening conditions in Yemen, UNHCR is working with IOM, the authorities and the Somali Consul to support refugees’ return to Somalia through an Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme. Return Help Desks established in Basateen and Kharaz Camp are providing an opportunity for Somalis to receive information on the voluntary process, including conditions in return locations.

Confronting the cholera epidemic, UNHCR is contributing to the wider response through its interventions which focus on areas with concentrated refugee communities. Community outreach at UNHCR supported health and community centres, early case detection/surveillance and referral services are ongoing. Over 1,100 brochures and flyers are shared with refugees in five languages on a weekly basis, and awareness sessions for both Yemenis and refugees are ongoing, reaching up to 1,000 people weekly. This week, 55 health and community workers were also trained on the cholera response. In Kharaz camp, UNHCR efforts include early case detection/surveillance, initiation of oral rehydration and referral of suspected cases to the UNHCR diarrheal treatment centre (DTC).