

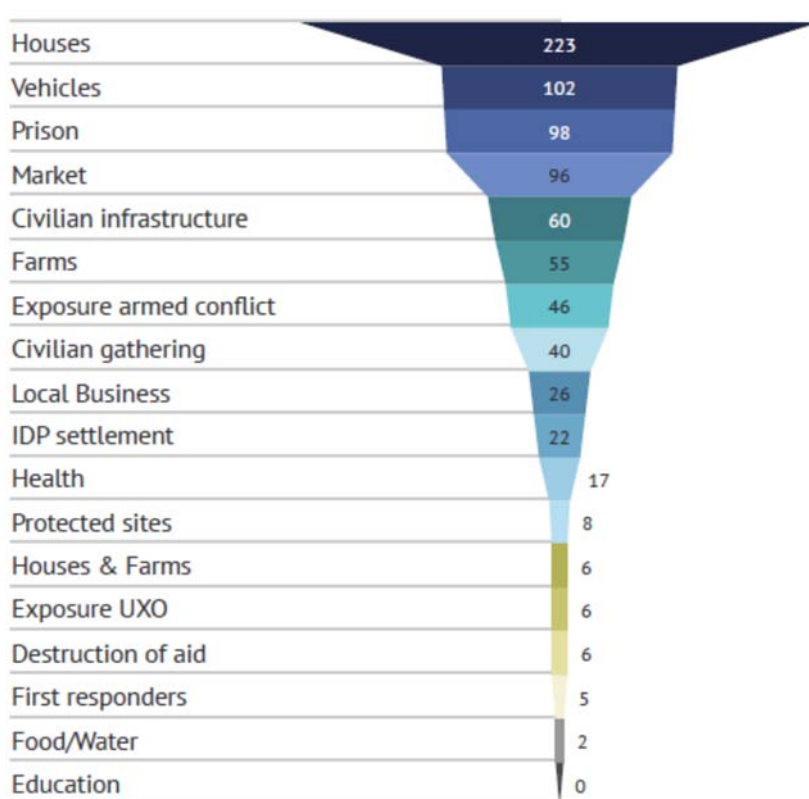
## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The conflict in Yemen has undergone major shifts, following December clashes in Sana'a city and fighting along the western coast which reached al-Hudaydah for the first time, in addition to renewed hostilities along other frontline locations such as Taizz and al-Jawf. In the process, Yemen has witnessed its worst period of civilian casualties since 2016, along with a new wave of displacement, including from North to South Yemen. In this context, ensuring protection of civilians remains paramount, as does addressing the growing protection needs for the conflict-affected and displaced population of Yemen.

### Protection of Civilians

The recent intensification of conflict has had a massive impact on the conflict-affected civilian population. Civilian casualties documented and verified by OHCHR in December 2017 were three times higher than the monthly average for the year. Governorates most affected by casualties in 2017 include Taizz (26%) where there has been intense, ongoing conflict, Al-Hudaydah (18%) where military offensives have recently reached as well as Sa'ada (11%). Based on data from the recently launched Civilian Impact Monitoring Project of the Protection Cluster (see '*In Focus*' section below), 35% of civilian casualties monitored had occurred when people were in their own homes or farms, 17% while at the market or other civilian gatherings, and 12% while they were driving, compared to only 5% who were directly exposed to armed conflict. Likewise, 74% of incidents resulting in civilian impact were caused by airstrikes, compared to 16% due to shelling, 4% armed clashes, 3% small arms fire and 2% unexploded ordinances.

### CASUALTIES BY LOCATION



Source: CIMP Bi-Monthly Report (Dec 17 – Jan 18)

### Internal Displacement

The upsurge in fighting in Yemen has resulted in a new wave of displacement, mainly originating along the western coast. According to UNHCR, IOM and other sources, more than 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been displaced since 1 December 2017, almost half being displaced from North to South. As of 22 February 2018, more than 8,000 IDP households had arrived in Southern governorates, some 55% of whom were from Al-Hudaydah, 15% from Shabwah and 15% from Taizz. Among these recently displaced to the South, some 46% were displaced in Abyan, in addition to 16% displaced within Shabwah and 15% in Lahj.

### ***Vulnerability and Persons with Specific Needs***

Conflict, cholera and risk of famine, together with the effects of the closure of air, sea and land crossings, continue to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of a population already suffering from the loss of heads of households, family separation and breakdown of community structures. A recent protection trends analysis conducted by protection cluster partner, INTERSOS, among IDPs and host community members in Aden, Lahj and Taizz, identified stark vulnerabilities, including 33% of more than 4,000 respondent households being female-headed. Among those identified with specific needs were those with serious medical conditions (22.6%), persons with disabilities (8.3%), women at risk (7.2%) and elderly at risk (3.8%) among the main vulnerabilities, not least an overall inability to meet basic needs. Equally high numbers of adults and children were identified as showing signs of psychological distress and need for psychosocial support. The analysis also identified increased housing, land and property issues related to displacement, including land grabbing and threats of eviction. An ongoing baseline assessment of IDPs living in 776 hosting sites in 16 governorates found some 17% of individuals to have specific needs, while 19% of sites reported risks of UXOs while 13% of sites an imminent risk of eviction.

### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

Through December and January, al-Hudaydah saw the most significant protection developments as military offensives on the west coast reached the governorate for the first time, resulting in more civilian casualties than anywhere else in Yemen. Particularly affected by armed clashes were al-Khawkhah, Hays, Zabid and al-Tuyahat districts, while a surge in airstrikes also hit the governorate, particularly along two of the main north-south routes, resulting in multiple deaths of civilians fleeing in vehicles. The fighting resulted in significant displacement, including to Southern governorates.



*IDP mother and child recently displaced from Hudaydah. Credit: UNHCR/N. Schmidhaussler*

In the South, the security situation in Aden remained unstable following escalating confrontations in early February. Meanwhile, fighting was ongoing in al-Dhale'e, Shabwah and Lahj, reaching the district of Tur al-Bahah which resulted in more internal displacement. Protection Cluster partners in the Aden hub conducted emergency displacement tracking and protection monitoring to respond to the needs of the influx of IDPs from al-Hudaydah. Based on focus group findings, newly arriving IDPs reported having relatives and friends trapped in al-Hudaydah as well as obstacles to flight. There were unconfirmed reports of forced recruitment, including of children, in the coastal towns, in parallel to unverified reports near other frontline locations.

While fighting escalated in al-Hudaydah, Taizz continued to be heavily impacted by conflict. In December and January, Taizz accounted for the second highest number of casualties, next to al-Hudaydah, and the highest in February 2018, following renewed military offensives in Taiz City in late January. Major incidents include an airstrike on a market on 24 December which resulted in multiple civilian casualties as well as the reported shelling of a playground on 7 February, resulting in the deaths of children.

Despite not being an active front, Sa'ada remains one of the most heavily impacted by airstrikes. While the Saudi-Yemen border continues to be affected by conflict incidents, the central districts of Sa'ada and Sahar remain the other main targets of airstrikes. Overall, there were almost twice the number of airstrikes on residential areas than any other target of airstrikes. Among the major incidents include an airstrike on 21 February 2018 which struck a food assistance delivery truck, resulting in numerous civilian fatalities.

## PROTECTION RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

Despite gaps in funding and constraints on humanitarian access, Protection Cluster partners continue to respond to the protection needs of the conflict-affected and displaced population. Recent highlights include:

- The Protection Cluster developed and shared key advocacy messages, broadly divided into: (a) Peace and human rights belong to all people of Yemen; (b) Everyone bears a responsibility and duty to ensure the protection of civilians in Yemen, including the Government and de facto authorities, as well as community and tribal leaders, heads of households, women and youth; (c) Protection must be the objective of humanitarian decision-making; (d) Children must be protected from the devastating consequences of war; and (e) Women and girls should be protected from gender-based violence (GBV).
- Following the launch of the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, Protection Cluster partners at the national and sub-national levels held two days of planning meetings, to agree on converging priority programming for areas in acute need and identifying areas for future strategic development on protection activities, such as protection monitoring and cash assistance.
- In recognition of the importance of mental health and psychosocial support needs for the conflict-affected population (adults and children), the Protection and Health Clusters agreed on the establishment of a joint mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) technical working group, merging with the existing PSS working group under the Child Protection Sub-Cluster. The new working group will aim to facilitate inter-cluster collaboration and integrated approaches to improving access to specialized and non-specialized MHPSS services.
- During the 16 Days of Activism, GBV Sub-Cluster members, Yemen Women's Union (YWU) and All Girls Foundation for Development, distributed over 650 and 400 dignity kits, respectively, in Ibb, Taizz, Amanat al-Asimah and Hudaydah. YWU also conducted awareness raising through a radio campaign and interactive theatre in order to address GBV issues, such as female genital mutilation and early or child marriage. Audiences included different age groups, IDPs and key community leaders such as sheikhs and religious leaders in al-Hudaydah, Hadramaut, Ibb, Hajjah and Amran.
- Together with the Yemeni Forum of Persons with Disabilities and YWU, UNFPA supported a first-of-its-kind study aimed at finding local tools to measure GBV against displaced women and girls with disabilities in Yemeni society. The study targeted Al-Hudaydah, Ibb, Al-Dhale'e, Amran, and Amanat al-Asimah.
- In November, December and January, OHCHR organized training workshops in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the commissioners, investigator assistants and field monitors of the Yemeni National Commission of Inquiry. Subjects covered included monitoring and documenting

## PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY

**Monitor key protection issues** (including violations of IHL/IHRL, displacement, vulnerable populations, gender-based violence and child protection) in order to **identify persons in need of assistance**, inform the humanitarian response and advocate for the protection of civilians

Provide **life-saving protection assistance and services** to vulnerable, conflict-affected individuals, including children and gender-based violence survivors

Develop **community-based responses** in order to prevent, mitigate or address protection needs and risks, and enhance individual and community coping strategies and conflict resolution

**Strengthen the capacity** of partners, service providers, civil society and authorities on protection

**Mainstream and integrate protection** into all sector and cluster-specific humanitarian responses

human rights violations, information gathering and gender mainstreaming. As part of training, OHCHR organized a visit between the Yemen commissioners and the chairperson of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to share best practices.

- In Shabwah, Child-Protection Sub-Cluster partners set up five child friendly spaces and trained 25 animators on psychosocial support to respond to the needs of displaced populations, Also in Shabwah, STEPS organization reported multiple landmines near Bayhan that were preventing people from returning to their homes and farms. In response to this and a reported increase in unexploded ordnance and mine casualties, the Mine Risk Education working group, led by YEMAC and UNICEF, trained 30 volunteers to reach 18,000 children and adults.
- In Taizz, OHCHR conducted a training for civil society, media and local authorities on mechanisms of protecting victims of human rights violations and strengthening the referral system for available services. OHCHR also worked and coordinated with the Ministry of Interior, including Human Rights Department and Rehabilitation and Correction Authority, and the Office of Attorney General, the Ministry of External Affairs, on a four day workshop on human rights and prisons for prison management staff, prosecutors, national security, political security and other government officials.
- Through the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, YWU started a project to provide psychosocial support, medical support, cash assistance and legal support, along with protection monitoring in Taizz. Nearby in Ibb, YWU was establishing a community center for IDPs in Ibb, supported by UNHCR, expected to be functional in the first half of March.
- In December 2017, UNHCR and its partner, INTERSOS, provided assistance to 3,546 persons with psychosocial support, 2,057 persons with legal support and 1,500 households with unconditional cash assistance for protection purposes in areas of southern Taiz, Lahj and Aden.
- In parts of Aden, Lahj and Shabwah, Protection Cluster partners conducted a rapid assessment of IDPs unable to obtain identification cards, birth certificates and/or marriage certificates. Based on the assessment, more than 4,500 persons lack at least one or more forms of identification documents. Protection partners were following up with legal assistance.
- Aden Sub-National Protection Cluster partners monitored checkpoints in Taizz, Lahj and al-Dhale'e to identify those checkpoints preventing IDPs from reaching Southern governorates. Advocacy was conducted to the Aden Security Belt regarding allowing the entry of IDPs, resulting in the change of policy of at least one checkpoint.
- In November and December 2017, the Aden Sub-National Protection Cluster provided training for community-based protection networks on protection and community engagement, as well as for partners on vulnerability and protection monitoring.
- In Ibb, Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women established new community-based protection networks, together with training on protection monitoring, psychosocial support and awareness raising on available protection services for more than 700 persons in January.
- In Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah, Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) established new community-based protection networks and provided information to more than 5,500 cases, while also providing legal assistance, psychosocial support and GBV multi-sectoral services. In a positive sign of



*Child in Amran abandons begging o return to school. Credit: Yemen Red Crescent*

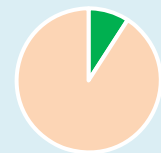


partnership, SDF worked closely with civil registration authorities who dedicated two employees to facilitate birth certificates for 130 children.

- DRC provided psychosocial support, legal assistance and provided information and awareness raising to local authorities on child rights. Community-based protection meetings were held in Al-Dhalee, Aden, Lahj, Shabwah and Taizz where community-based action plans were developed and being implemented.
- In response to the escalating conflict, CSSW conducted an assessment of IDPs in Marib and Sirwah showing dire needs across all sectors, including for IDPs living in makeshift wooden shelters and 42% whose homes were entirely destroyed due to the conflict.
- Yemen Red Crescent (YRC), in partnership with UNHCR, provided psycho-social support to some 2,148 IDPs, IDP returnees and host community members through one-to-one sessions and field visits, as well as consultations at community centers. Legal support was also provided on matters of documentation, eviction, domestic violence and others. Awareness raising sessions focused on available services as well as early marriage, GBV and rights of the displaced.
- Al-Nahda Makers organization conducted a rapid assessment of IDPs who fled from conflict areas in Tur al-Bahah district in Lahj to other safer areas within the district. The aim of the assessment was to identify protection risk and the current situation for the IDP s including their main needs and the problems faced as they are still near the conflict areas.

## KEY FIGURES

PEOPLE IN NEED	12.9 M
PEOPLE IN ACUTE NEED	6.5 M
IDPs	2.0 M
IDP RETURNEES	1.0 M
PERSONS TARGETED	5.0M
FUNDING REQUESTED	104.1 M
FUNDING MET**	9.5M
UNMET NEEDS	94.6M



**9.1%**  
**FUNDED**

\*Figures based on FTS as of 28 February 2018

## IN FOCUS: CIVILIAN IMPACT MONITORING PROJECT

Beginning in December 2017, the Protection Cluster established the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP), as a monitoring mechanism for real-time collection, analysis and dissemination of data on the civilian impact from armed violence in Yemen, with the purpose of informing and complementing protection programming. CIMP is a service under the Protection Cluster Yemen and is currently implemented as a pilot project targeting five governorates; Al-Hudaydah, Sa'ada, Sana'a Governorate, Sana'a Capital and Marib.

The team at CIMP collect, analyse and disseminate data in real-time to allow for early warning and early protection response directed at communities affected by armed violence, including new and emerging local conflicts. This is done through weekly flash reports on impact from armed violence in the monitored governorates, including protection forecast and information on victim assistance needs. Data collection comes from systematic, open source data on all incidents of armed violence, filtered by the CIMP team in order to evaluate incidents with possible civilian impact and cross-referenced to the extent possible, and then supplemented through additional information and verification achieved through partners in the field. Finally, the data is regularly triangulated with other humanitarian databases.

The first bi-monthly report is available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/civilian-impact-monitoring-report-february-2018>



## PROTECTION CLUSTER | CONTACTS

Samuel Cheung ([cheung@unhcr.org](mailto:cheung@unhcr.org))  
Senior Protection Cluster Coordinator

Safa Algahoum ([algahoum@unhcr.org](mailto:algahoum@unhcr.org))  
Protection Associate, Protection Cluster