

# HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

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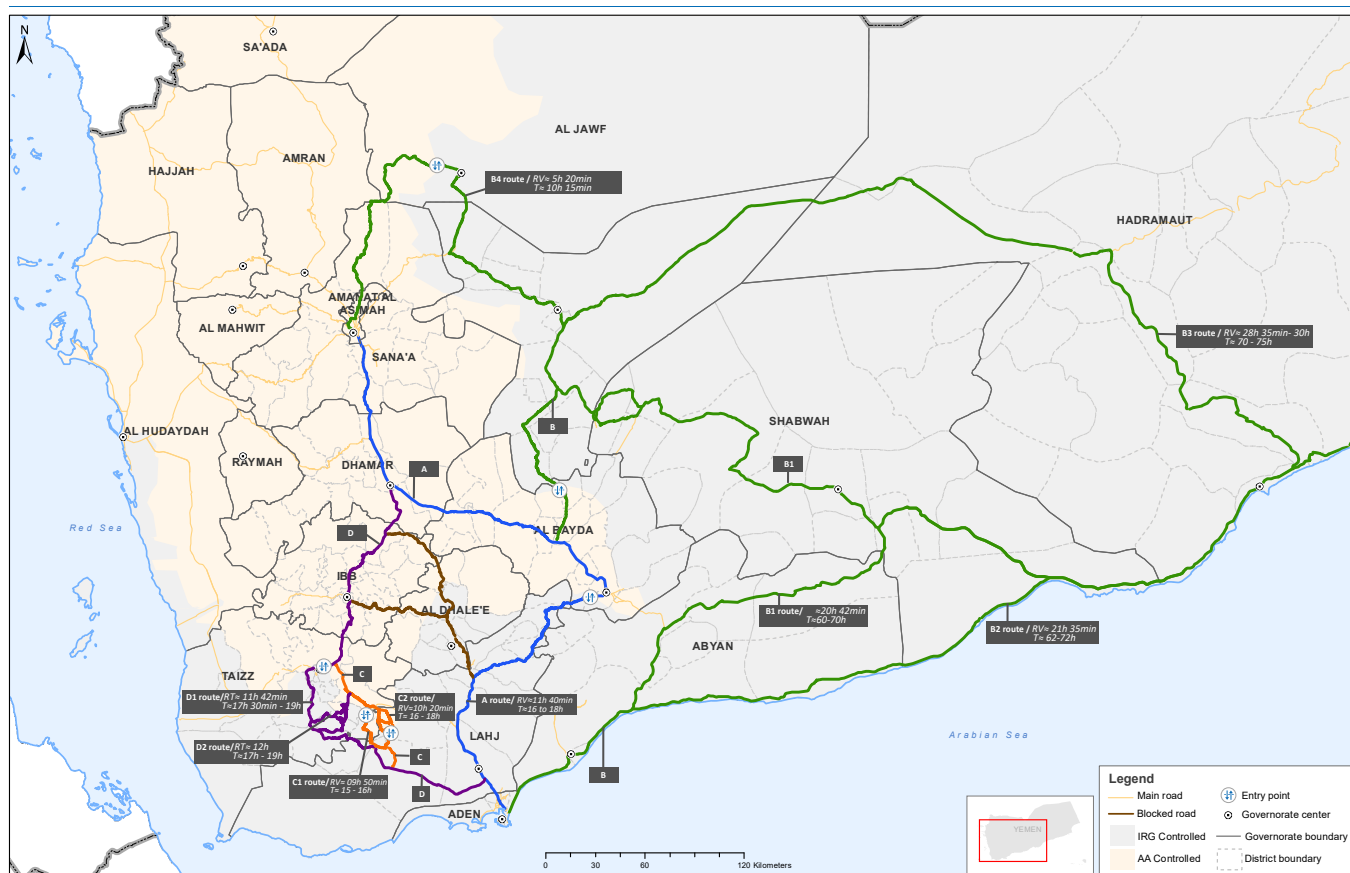
## KEY ISSUES:

- Closure of the Aden-Sana'a route due to fighting strains humanitarian operations.
- Concerns have risen over high casualty numbers as more civilians are killed in hostilities.
- Rapid Response Mechanism assistance has reached more than 1.5 million people since June 2018.
- UNDP plans to upgrade the facilities at Al Hudaydah, As Saleef and Ras Isa sea ports.
- Humanitarian agencies face severe funding shortfall despite increasing needs.

## CLOSURE OF ADEN-SANA'A ROUTE STRAINS HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

Since 22 April, one of the major land routes connecting Aden and Sana'a has closed due to fighting in Qa'atabah and neighbouring districts in Al Dhale'e Governorate. Humanitarian partners have to use alternative routes that pass through insecure areas with numerous checkpoints. The April closure of the Aden-Sana'a route has exacerbated an already difficult logistics situation for humanitarian partners, as the most direct through Qa'atabah closed in November 2018, due to fighting in Damt District. That route also remains closed.

The closure of these routes has slowed down the delivery of humanitarian supplies, with trucks carrying humanitarian supplies taking more than 60 hours to travel between Aden and Sana'a, which is about four times longer than used to be the case. It has also made humanitarian operations more expensive. It now costs humanitarian partners on average 60 per cent more to transport humanitarian supplies from Aden to Sana'a and other northern governorates.



Aden-Sana'a road network showing the closed routes. ©OCHA

The movement of food supplies has been particularly strained. WFP transports roughly 20,000 metric tons (MT) of food supplies from Aden port to Sana'a and northern governorates every month. These supplies provide the bulk of monthly emergency food assistance that reached 10.6 million Yemenis in March,

the highest number reached in one month out of a target of just over 12 million per month in 2019. Restrictions on the movement of goods and staff are the biggest hurdles facing humanitarian partners in Yemen. As the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, stated in his briefing to the UN Security

Council on 15 May, severe access restrictions imposed by parties to the conflict continue to be a major challenge.

Bureaucratic delays in customs and other clearance pose further problems. In recent weeks, over 150 trucks carrying humanitarian assistance stuck within Ibb Governorate where local authorities have demanded additional taxes and clearances. Together with other factors, these delays have prevented WFP from reaching its monthly targets, with the number of people receiving food assistance in April dropping to about 10.2 million.

The operating environment is growing increasingly complex and non-permissive, especially in the north of the country. Between January and February 2019, 83 access incidents were reported in 13 governorates affecting more than 912,000 beneficiaries.

Humanitarian partners have appealed to all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians and aid workers alike and to facilitate access to people in need.

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## CONCERNS OVER RISING CIVILIAN CASUALTY NUMBERS

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Hostilities across Yemen continue to exact a high civilian toll, although fewer casualties were reported in the first three months of 2019 than in the same period in 2018. "Violence rages still," Mr. Lowcock told the Security Council on 15 May. "In the first quarter of the year, more than 900 civilian casualties were reported. And it is a sobering fact of the war in Yemen...that civilians are more likely to die in their own homes than anywhere else, as a result of the war."

On 16 May, multiple air strikes hit various locations in Amanat Al Asimah and Sana'a governorates, killing children and wounding more than 70 civilians including foreign health workers and a refugee. In a statement, Ms. Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen said: "This terrible incident is a tragic reminder of all the reasons this war must stop."



An injured boy being treated at a hospital in Sana'a. © C. Cans/OCHA

The Protection Cluster reported 52 civilian casualties in Al Dhale'e Governorate between 9 and 15 May. This figure included seven civilians, six of whom were children, who were killed in a strike on houses in Shalil area on 11 May. During the reporting period, a surge in civilian casualties was reported in Sa'ada and Al Jawf governorates. In Majz District, Sa'ada Governorate, an airstrike hit a vehicle, killing six civilians and injuring one other. Majz has seen a share of casualties owing to its proximity to areas of active hostilities. In Al Ghayl District, shellfire hit a vehicle killing two civilians.

In Hajjah Governorate, the Protection Cluster reported confrontations in Hayran District and airstrikes and bombing in Abs. The casualty rate across the Al Hudaydah Hub remained high, with 19 civilian casualties reported between 9 and 15 May, including four in Hajjah. Heavy weapons were used in Al Hali District while strikes intensified in Ad Durayhimi District. Hostilities were also reported Al Jabaliyah area in At Tuhayta District. One child was killed in Al Hali and another injured. In Taizz Governorate, 12 civilian casualties were reported between 9 and 15 May. According to the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, in the year to date, an average 17 civilian casualties have been reported each week.

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## COOKING GAS SHORTAGES PERSIST ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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Field reports indicate that a shortage of cooking gas persists in many areas. In Sana'a region, cooking gas stations are no longer operational. Most households can only access one 20-litre cylinder per month costing 3,300 Yemeni rials (YER) through official channels or can buy cylinders on the black market at YER8,500. In Sa'ada, most households can only access a 20-litre cylinder each month at YER2,200, or cylinders are available on the black market at YER8,000. In Ibb, the official price of a gas cylinder is YER2,000, but because gas is rarely available on

the official market, many families buy from the black market at YER6,500.

Following widespread shortages of gasoline in March and April, petrol and diesel is now largely available at the official price of YER7,300 for a 20-litre jerrycan and diesel at YER8,600 for a 20-litre jerrycan. In Ibb, queues were reported at gasoline stations due to increased demand and fear of potential shortages during Ramadhan

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## MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH THE RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM

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Humanitarian workers in Yemen have reached more than 1.5 million people (261,150 households) through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), launched in June 2018. According to UNFPA, which has led the RRM since October 2018, the highest numbers reached as of 17 May are in the Al Hudaydah hub area (158,790 households), followed by Sana'a

(44,073 households) and Aden (20,282 households).

RRM kits contain three packs from three different agencies: ready to eat food provided by WFP, basic family hygiene kits from UNICEF and female dignity kits provided by UNFPA. The assistance is provided in response to emergency needs when there

is rapid, large-scale population displacement or sudden deterioration in the humanitarian situation due to conflict and/or natural disaster.

The assistance is often delivered to families on the move, often in hard-to-reach areas. Across Yemen, delivery of RRM assistance has faced several challenges including delays in registering newly displaced people and in information sharing, and delays in transporting RRM kits and limited storage capacity in Hajjah, Ibb, Sa'ada and Turbah hubs.



RRM kits set for distribution in Al Maharah Governorate. ©UNFPA

## UNDP PLANNING TO UPGRADE AL HUDAYDAH, AS SALEEF AND RAS ISA SEA PORTS

Following the unilateral redeployment from Al Hudaydah, As Saleef and Ras Isa sea ports, UNDP has announced plans to upgrade the facilities at the three Red Sea ports. Al Hudaydah port is a lifeline for northern areas of Yemen. More than 70 per cent of all commercial and vital humanitarian supplies such as food and medicine enter the country through this facility. In August 2015, the port was hit by air strikes, reducing its operational capacity. A temporary closure of the ports in November 2017 further affected operations. In 2018, hostilities escalated in Al Hudaydah City. Although the ports remained functional, the conflict reduced operations.



RRM kits set for distribution in Al Maharah Governorate. ©UNFPA

“Upgrading the facilities at the ports is urgent,” said Ms. Lise Grande, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen. “It is a race against time to move food, fuel, medicines and other vital commodities as quickly and smoothly as possible to the millions of people across the country, who depend on humanitarian assistance.” Demining will also be carried to remove sea mines.

“This is phase one of our critical efforts to restore normal operations at these ports,” said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative in Yemen. “We are drawing upon our extensive experience, as well as national and international expertise, to ensure we can fully restore the functionality of the ports as soon as possible.”

The Stockholm agreement aims to fully demilitarise the ports, paving the way for optimum operations.

## UNVIM

Al Hudaydah and As Saleef sea ports are operational. Between 8-14 May, nine vessels berthed in Al Hudaydah (seven) and As Saleef (two), discharging 182,000 MT of food commodities and 73,408 MT of fuel supplies (total 255,408 MT of supplies). Seven other vessels carrying 152,297 MT of food had been cleared to enter anchorage area in Al Hudaydah port. No vessel discharged at Ras Isa port.



182,000 MT



73,408 MT

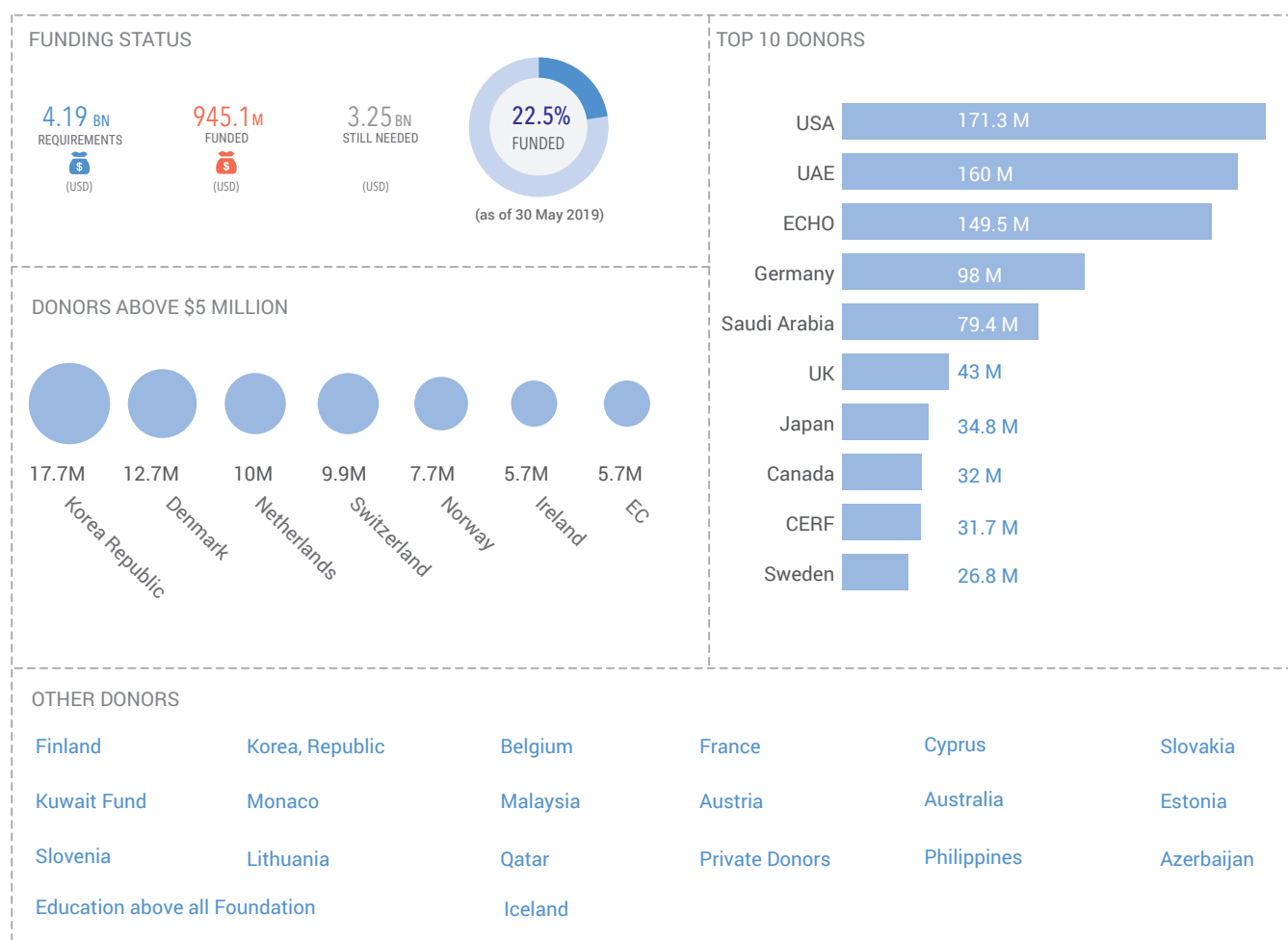
Al Hudaydah 158,158 MT

Saleef 97,250 MT

Source: UNVIM

## FUNDING OF THE 2019 YHRP (as of 30 May 2019)

Humanitarian agencies operating in Yemen are facing a severe funding shortfall despite increasing needs. The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) requires US\$4.2 billion to provide assistance to more than 20 million Yemenis but is only 22.5 per cent funded. Humanitarian agencies are appealing to donors to provide funds as quickly as possible.



Source: FTS

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