

A young child with dark, curly hair is filling a yellow plastic jerrycan from a public water tap. The child is wearing a white lace-trimmed tank top and blue jeans. The tap is mounted on a concrete wall, and a green hose is connected to it. In the background, other similar taps and hoses are visible, suggesting a public water distribution point. The overall scene is set in a dry, arid environment.

# HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

© Ayman Fouad/YPN for UNICEF

Issue 11 / November 2020

**Issue 11 / November 2020**

on the brink of famine and at risk of falling into catastrophic conditions if aid is not ramped up.

“These alarming numbers must be a wake-up call to the world. Yemen is on the brink of famine and we must not turn our backs on the millions of families who are now in desperate need. Make no mistake, 2021 will be even worse than 2020 for Yemen’s most vulnerable people. Famine can still be prevented – but that opportunity is slipping away with every day that passes,” said David Beasley, Executive Director of WFP.

Phase 4 is a final call for action –people in Phase 4 on IPC’s hunger spectrum are already suffering enormously and the most vulnerable are at risk of dying of hunger-related causes. Over half the population –16.2 million of 30 million – will face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse (Phase 3+) by mid-2021. Many families are on the threshold of slipping into more acute levels of hunger, exhausted by over five years of war that has left them extremely vulnerable to shocks.



*A humanitarian worker measures the height of a displaced child*  
© Ali Swaid/YPN for IOM

“Keeping people alive by maintaining the flow of food is imperative, but this cycle cannot continue forever. Yemen needs a cessation of conflict, which is the primary driver of food insecurity in the country. Yemeni families need stability and security – and livelihood assistance to help them resume normal food production, so that they require less external support, and can build more resilient and self-sufficient food systems,” said FAO Director-

General, QU Dongyu.

Immediate and coordinated humanitarian support is critical to preventing famine and saving lives in Yemen. But significant funding shortfalls threaten lifeline food assistance, life-saving malnutrition services for infants and pregnant and nursing women, and critical livelihood support.

“The world cannot stand by as Yemen slips into famine and millions of vulnerable children and families go hungry,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “The situation is already catastrophic, and without urgent action, more children will die. We have prevented famine in Yemen before, and we should be able to prevent it again, with increased support and with unimpeded access to every child and family in need.”

The spiraling food insecurity crisis is a combination of complex causes: prolonged conflict has driven economic collapse, and a dramatic increase in food prices has affected the south of the country while a blockade on fuel imports has exacerbated the situation in the north. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded suffering as remittances have fallen, earning opportunities have dried up, health services been stretched to the limits and travel restrictions have compromised access to markets. In addition, a locust plague and flash floods have battered local food production in some areas.

Cuts to humanitarian support this year, including food assistance, have erased previous food security gains and left families with worsening food consumption gaps. Next year, aid cuts will continue and the situation will deteriorate without an injection of funding. Agencies warn that their alarming forecasts may underestimate the gravity of the situation, particularly if there are further cuts to the aid budget.

On 20 November, the Secretary-General, António Guterres, urged all those with influence to take immediate action in order to avert a tragedy that will result “not just in the immediate loss of life but with consequences that will reverberate indefinitely into the future.”

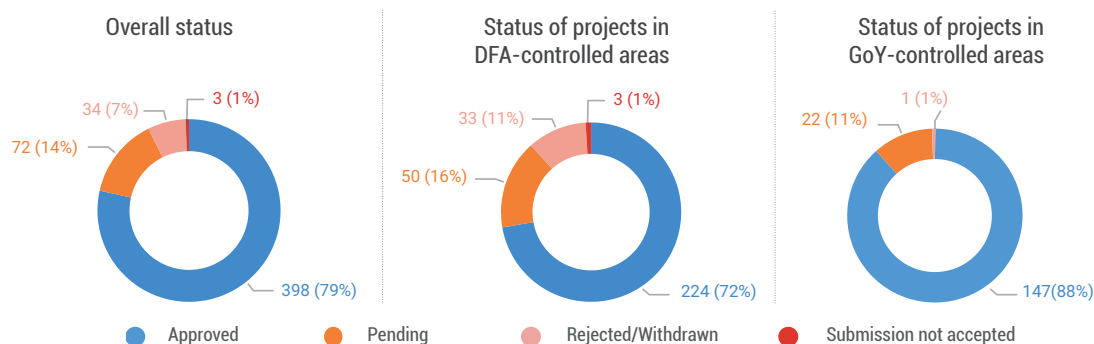
## Senior officials recommit to tackling the humanitarian crisis in Yemen as the situation deteriorates

A second Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Yemen, held on 12 November, hosted by the European Commission and Government of Sweden, brought together donors, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Participants expressed their concern at the worsening humanitarian situation, the threat of

famine and the funding shortfall while confirming their continued commitment to providing vital and principled support to the Yemeni people.

In a joint statement, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, and Swedish Minister for International Development

## Status of sub-agreements in Yemen (November 2020)



Source: OCHA Yemen

Cooperation, Peter Eriksson said; “Since our first meeting in February, there have been improvements in the operating environment for humanitarian. But this progress is insufficient to keep pace with the growing needs. Increased collaboration from the parties to the conflict is urgently needed. We recall the obligation by all parties to comply with International Humanitarian Law. All restrictions, obstructions and interference violating humanitarian principles should be sustainably removed once and for all.”

The first meeting of the SOM on 13 February 2020, resulted in a number of collective commitments, including working towards opening up humanitarian space and ending violations of humanitarian principles. The second SOM meeting, while acknowledging some progress in the operating environment in the intervening months, focused on the need for further improvements on humanitarian access, impact and accountability. Progress was achieved in expediting approvals of long delayed NGO project sub-agreements across the country. By mid-November, 244 projects with a value of over \$430 million were reported to have been approved by the Government of Yemen (GoY) and the Ansar Allah de facto authorities (DFA), enabling humanitarian assistance to reach millions of vulnerable people. However, as of 20 November, 75 NGO projects, targeting up to 4.5 million people and with a total budget of \$169 million, were reported to remain unimplemented, in part or in full, due to outstanding sub-agreement approvals. Delays with sub-agreements are a particular issue in areas in DFA-controlled northern governorates, where sub-agreement

approvals take an average of between 150 and 160 days. The delays are predominantly due to arbitrary interference in project design and project management components, often in contravention of humanitarian principles and internal and donor rules and regulations.

Humanitarian stakeholders continue to work with the authorities to expedite the approval of sub-agreements and to establish accountable and principled procedures for timely approvals. Participants in SOM II agreed that, if and where the operating environment limits or obstructs the flow of principled and accountable aid, humanitarian programmes will continue to be adapted and recalibrated, focusing on life-saving activities and the most vulnerable people.

By the close of SOM II, humanitarian actors had agreed to work collectively to maintain regular and constructive dialogue with all parties on a range of issues. These included advocating urgently on the need to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and the protection of civilians. In addition, there was agreement to mobilize and disperse urgently needed funding to preserve and increase life-saving assistance, including for food, water, health care, nutrition and protection. Further, participants identified the need for a support package to prevent economic collapse, including foreign-exchange injections, and to identify ways of allowing more focused developmental and financial support to address the drivers of the crisis to keep Yemen from the brink of collapse.

## Health Cluster and partners prepare for a second wave of COVID-19

Partners are preparing for a second wave of COVID-19 in Yemen. As of 30 November, the number of reported confirmed COVID-19 cases had reached 2,077 with 607 associated deaths and 1,381 recoveries. While it is unclear when a second wave will occur, it is likely to peak in the winter months, and it could be more robust and sustained

than the initial wave, especially if it overlaps with the influenza season.

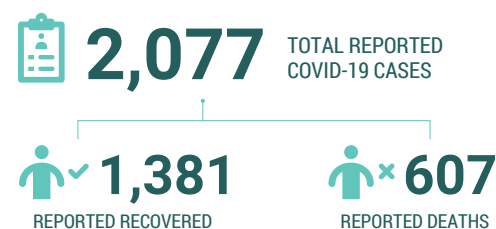
In preparation, the Health Cluster is working on a number of priorities. These include engaging widely with vulnerable groups through risk communication and community engagement and re-establishing

and reinforcing essential health services to ensure they function throughout the winter months. Another priority is strengthening and maintaining the functionality of existing surveillance systems, which allow for the detection and rapid response to outbreaks and for the monitoring of disease trends within districts.

In addition, the Health Cluster is coordinating with partners to enhance the implementation of non-pharmaceutical measures to prevent COVID-19 infection in Yemen. Growing evidence from around the world has confirmed that adherence to basic public health measures can significantly prevent COVID-19 acquisition and transmission and thus reduce morbidity and mortality. These measures include maintaining physical distance, universal wearing of face masks, avoiding crowds and gatherings especially indoors, and frequent hand washing. Furthermore, the Health Cluster

recognizes the importance of the technical elements of the response including the need for appropriate clinical case management; infection prevention and control; enhanced surveillance and laboratory capacity; vulnerable individuals to shield; and the need to replenish personal protective equipment for the healthcare system.

### COVID-19 cases (as of November 2020)



Source: WHO Yemen

## Global Humanitarian Overview indicates increasing humanitarian needs

The Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO), the world's most comprehensive, authoritative and evidence-based overview of the current state and future trends in humanitarian action, was launched on 1 December at events in Geneva, Berlin, Brussels, London and Washington D.C. The GHO indicates that around the world, climate change, conflict and COVID-19 are pushing humanitarian needs to record highs.

The GHO indicates that in Yemen, humanitarian needs continue to grow, driven primarily by protracted conflict and economic blockade, exacerbated by natural hazards, in particular heavy rains and flooding. Key concerns focus on

in funding – the operation received significantly less resources than in 2019, – a highly restrictive operating environment, and to some extent, partner capacity. The GHO indicates that if the drivers of the humanitarian crisis persist and these challenges remain unaddressed, the situation for people in need in Yemen will deteriorate further in 2021.

While needs assessments and analyses are finalized for 2021, the GHO uses indicative figures for Yemen – rolled over from 2020 – for needs, the number of people to be targeted with assistance and financial requirements. An estimated 24.3 million people, 80 per cent of the population, continue to need humanitarian assistance or protection in Yemen, though indicators suggest severity of needs is increasing. The clusters and OCHA are working with agencies and partners to finalize figures for the 2021 Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). They have developed an inter-sectoral comprehensive analysis, employing the Joint Inter-Sector Analysis Framework (JIAF), that places affected people at the centre of the response, and have worked with agencies to consolidate sex and age-disaggregated population and displacement figures. Efforts have been made to ensure that cross-cutting issues such as gender and cash modalities are integrated into the HNO and HRP and that the focus on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the inclusion of vulnerable groups is strengthened. The HNO and HRP are due to be finalized in the new year.

### 2021 Key figures\*



\*Figures are based on the 2020 PiN and target pending the 2021 HNO and HRP figures.

rising food insecurity and malnutrition and the capacity of the fragile health system to manage the disease burden, including COVID-19. In 2020, the humanitarian response was held back by a shortfall



## Fuel crisis in northern governorates subsides briefly before resurfacing

In November, the fuel crisis that had beset northern governorates since June 2020, subsided for several weeks. The crisis initially arose in June over a dispute about the use of oil revenues and led to a blockade of fuel vessels arriving at Al Hudaydah port.

Between June and October, almost all official fuel stations closed, forcing people to buy fuel at inflated prices on the informal market where prices reached up to YER22,500 (about \$37.5) for 20 litres, over 280 per cent more than the official price of YER5,900 (about \$9.8) for 20 litres. The crisis affected both humanitarian needs and the response. During the five-month period, as the cost of fuel increased, the price of essential items soared, unemployment increased and incomes fell, leading to reduced access to food and healthcare for many families, and supplies of safe water decreased. Public transport, and transport of goods and medical supplies were disrupted, aid distributions were delayed and field and monitoring missions reduced. Families resorted to negative coping mechanisms including child labour and child marriage, and an increased incidence of armed groups recruiting children was observed. An increase in burn injuries was reported by one international NGO, as families took to storing fuel in their homes and accidents occurred.

Though the Government of Yemen and the de facto authorities never reached a formal agreement on the

dispute, from mid-October, there was an increase in the number of fuel vessels allowed to dock at Al Hudaydah port and 394,327 metric tons (MT) of fuel derivatives were discharged between July and October, with another 194,713 MT discharged in November. On 11 November, the Yemen Petroleum Company announced the end of the fuel crisis, official fuel stations gradually reopened



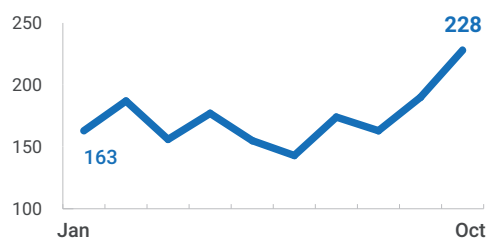
Queues at gas stations in the northern governorates extended for several kilometres. © Sana'a Center/ Asem Alposi

and the price of fuel returned to pre-crisis levels. However, by the last week of November, queues had again appeared at fuel stations in some northern governorates and the YPC had launched an emergency plan, limiting the number of fuel stations that could open, opening hours and the quantity of and frequency with which fuel could be purchased.

## Civilian casualties peak in October

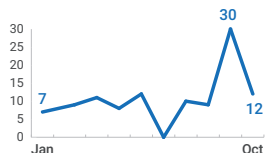
As clashes continue, escalating in some areas, and the number of active frontlines climbed to 49,

Civilian casualties in Yemen January - October 2020

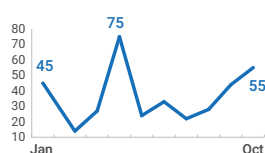


the highest monthly number of civilian casualties this year was recorded in Yemen in October. The Protection Cluster's Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) recorded 228 civilian casualties – 50 fatalities (including 9 children and 9 women) and 178 people injured (including 33 children and 25 women) – in October. The number of civilian casualties fluctuated over the first 10 months of 2020 with the lowest number – 143 – recorded by CIMP in June. The increase in October is significant, this is the first time this year that the monthly figure has risen above 200, up from 190 civilian casualties recorded in September, the second highest number recorded in 2020.

Civilians casualties in Marib



Civilians casualties in Taizz



Civilians casualties in Al Hudaydah



Civilians casualties in Sa'adah



Source: The Protection Cluster's Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP)

The increase in the number of casualties over recent months has been particularly steep in Al Hudaydah, where 74 civilian casualties were recorded in October, and Taizz, where 55 civilian casualties were recorded in October. There have also been increases in casualty numbers in Marib and Sa'ada. These reflect ongoing or increased hostilities along local frontlines in each of the governorates.

## Humanitarian Coordinator condemns an attack on humanitarian workers in Taizz Governorate

The Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Lise Grande, condemned an attack on a mobile medical clinic run by the Emirates Red Crescent in the Yakhtil area of Al Mukha District in Taizz Governorate on 17 November, where staff were providing services to residents of Al-Mashqar Village. Staff were inside the clinic when bullets penetrated the

vehicle but were unhurt. "Humanitarian agencies in Yemen are working around the clock every single day to provide life-saving assistance to millions of Yemenis," said Ms. Grande. "We do this in one of the toughest environments in the world". The Humanitarian Coordinator urged the authorities to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice while highlighting the bleak outlook in Yemen. "Yemen is facing a real risk of large-scale famine," said Ms. Grande. "We need donors to fund this operation so we can save the lives of people who will starve and die."

On 29 November, an attack in Ad Durayhimi in Al Hudaydah Governorate, killed five children and three women, injuring another five children and three women. The Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen a.i., Mr. Altaf Musani stated, "This is a shocking attack and a clear breach of international humanitarian law", and called on the parties to the conflict to, "find a way to work towards sustainable peace and prevent further misery and save lives."

**For further information, please contact:**

**Aiden O'Leary**

Head of Office,  
UN-OCHA Yemen  
E-mail: oleary@un.org

**Tapiwa Gomo**

Head of  
Communication,  
UN-OCHA Yemen  
Tel: +967 712 222 860  
E-mail: gomo@un.org

**OCHA information products are available at:**

[www.unocha.org/yemen](http://www.unocha.org/yemen)  
[www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org)  
[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

## Pooled funds allocate \$167 million to underfunded response areas

### Central Emergency Relief Fund makes highest ever annual allocation to Yemen operation

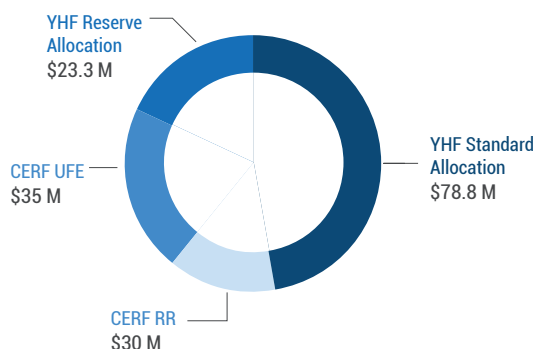
In response to the alarming levels of food insecurity in Yemen, in early November the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mark Lowcock, allocated \$30 million from the Rapid Response window of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to address increasing food insecurity through cash and voucher assistance. Yemen is one of 6 countries to receive a share of an \$80 million – allocations were also made to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, north-east Nigeria, and South Sudan. The Yemen allocation coincides with the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis indicating that pockets of famine-

like conditions (IPC Phase 5) exist across the country. The recent funding follows an earlier \$35 million CERF allocation in July, made under the Under-Funded Emergency window, to support public health and the specific needs of women and girls. The two allocations, totaling \$65m, are the largest amount ever allocated by CERF to a country response in a single year.

### Yemen Humanitarian Fund allocation underway

On 19 November, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) launched a \$75.85 million allocation to provide immediate funding to assist people in acute humanitarian need to mitigate the risks of famine and the consequences of COVID-19. The allocation will support activities for high priority unfunded needs in four districts in Taizz Governorate – Al Mukha, Maqbanah, As Silw and Hayfan – where over 520,000 people are in acute need. The funding will also support activities to support people in acute need in the ongoing emergency response, focusing on critically underfunded protection programmes, the response to internally displaced people, and pre-positioning critical life-saving emergency items in line with the national contingency plan. In addition, emergency funding to the emergency telecommunication cluster was made available to prevent an interruption of IT services for humanitarian partners in the field.

### Support from OCHA Pooled Funds to Yemen in 2020



Source: OCHA Yemen