

YEMEN

FEBRUARY

2016

FACTSHEET



UNHCR conducting protection monitoring of IDPs in spontaneous settlements in Raidah, Amran governorate, which UNHCR has provided with emergency shelter kits. © UNHCR/M. Al-Sobari

KEY FIGURES

267,675

Registered refugees as of 29 February

11,104

Registered asylum seekers as of 29 February

2,430,178

Internally Displaced People as of 31 January

7,705

New arrivals to Yemen in February

POPULATION OF CONCERN

2,708,957 refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

| Country | Refugees | Asylum Seekers | Total |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Somalia | 253,547 | - | 253,547 |
| Ethiopia | 5,707 | 9,233 | 14,940 |
| Iraq | 3,406 | 138 | 3,544 |
| Syria | 3,043 | 612 | 3,655 |
| Other | 1,972 | 1,121 | 3,093 |
| Yemen (IDPs) | - | - | 2,430,178 |
| Total | 267,675 | 11,104 | 2,708,957 |

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

123 national staff | **28** international staff*

* International staff presence fluctuating between Yemen and Jordan

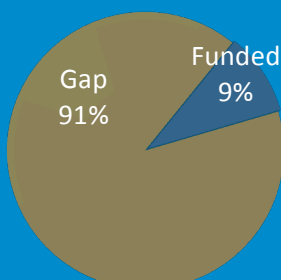
Offices:

Representation, including the Protection Office, in Sana'a; Sub-Office Aden; Field Office Al Hudaydah, Field Office Kharaz refugee camp; Mayfa'a reception centre; Bab el Mandab transit centre; Yemen Operational Centre in Amman, Jordan. N.B. Field Offices in Sa'ada and Ibb are planned to (re) open in Spring 2016.

FUNDING

128.6 million USD

Requested in 2016 as of 14 March to address all UNHCR interventions for persons of concern in Yemen



HIGHLIGHTS

- Nearly one in every ten persons in Yemen is internally displaced. Faced with the consequences of conflict, Yemenis continue to flee from their homes, often without many possessions in desperate search of safety and means of survival. The Task Force on Population Movement (TFPM), under the Protection Cluster and led by UNHCR and IOM in collaboration with several operational partners has determined in its 7th report released on 17 February that there are **2,430,178** internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Yemen as of 31 January 2016.
- The UNHCR Representative led a mission to Taizz on 14 February, during which he oversaw the delivery of blankets, mattresses, and other emergency relief aid to 1,000 conflict-affected families largely isolated by months of intense fighting in three locations in the embattled centre of Taizz city: Al Qahirah, Salh and Al Mudhaffar districts. This is the first time UNHCR has been able to access the city after months of trying to bring in much needed humanitarian assistance.
- UNHCR wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) expressing concern about recent arrests and detention of foreign nationals including refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR also expressed concern about reports of forced recruitment of foreign nationals including refugees and asylum seekers by the various armed groups involved in the conflict. MoFA confirmed that persons holding a refugee or an asylum seeker document should not be arrested nor detained. MoFA denied any involvement of the authorities in forced recruitment of foreigners. UNHCR committed to reaching out to local authorities and law enforcement officials about the value of UNHCR refugee and asylum seeker documents, including temporary protection documents (Syrians).
- Smugglers transporting 54 Ethiopians and one Somali on a small boat from Obock, Djibouti on 6 February began to forcibly throw off the passengers as the ship came in sight of the Red Sea coast of Yemen. Only 34 persons made it safely to shore, while 20 were left unaccounted for and presumably drowned. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) patrol along the Red Sea coast to assist new arrivals, found 23 of the survivors a few kilometres east of Bab-al-Mandab, and contacted the Yemen Red Crescent (YRC) to come, collect and transport them to Kharaz refugee camp.
- As a boat carrying 100 passengers that had disembarked from Obock, Djibouti, was beginning to make land near Bab-al-Mandab on the Red Sea coast of Yemen on 28 February, local armed groups opened fire in the air to chase away the boat. The crew immediately returned to sea and then sailed to another point near the coast and forced the passengers out about 100 meters from the shore, where one reportedly drowned. Armed traffickers were waiting at the coast and took 36 of the Ethiopians. The DRC patrol found those who had gotten away and provided them with assistance.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Yemen is a historic transit hub for mixed migratory movements of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Although Yemen is the poorest of the Gulf countries, it stands out in the region for its generosity towards refugees. It is the only country in the Arabian Peninsula that is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Nearly a year into the conflict, the already precarious humanitarian and socio-economic conditions coupled with the security situation has substantially deteriorated. Some 21.2 million people (82% of the population) require some form of humanitarian or protection assistance. WHO has reported on the basis of data collected from health facilities from 26 March 2015 to 29 February 2016 that 6,259 people have been killed and 29,852 wounded as a result of the hostilities. According to OHCHR there have been 3,218 civilians killed and a further 5,778 civilians injured (from 26 March 2015 to 17 March 2016).

With the ongoing conflict, loss of livelihood and internal displacement has come a range of concerns for protection and basic needs for the internally displaced and the hosting communities across the country. Lack of water and sanitation and in some cases overcrowded shelters, expose people to serious risks of disease and gender-based violence.

Basic services across the country are on the verge of collapse. Around 14 million Yemenis do not have sufficient access to healthcare services. At least 7.6 million people are severely food insecure. Over 1,170 schools are now unfit for use due to conflict-related damage, presence of internally displaced people, or occupation by armed groups.

UNHCR and partners address critical needs including shelter, non-food items, protection services, cash assistance, livelihood opportunities, food, health care and education support.

SPOTLIGHT



In Taizz, UNHCR has been advocating for unfettered, rapid and sustained access to humanitarian aid, particularly in the hardest hit-areas where most of the internally displaced are located. On 14 February, UNHCR Representative Johannes van der Klaauw led a mission to Taizz, during which he oversaw the delivery of emergency relief aid to 1,000 conflict-affected families in the embattled centre of Taizz city that UNHCR had been unable to access for more than five months. The Representative noted that this first distribution of domestic relief items should be a prelude for sustained access and delivery of various types of aid into the city and surrounding districts in the governorate. © UNHCR/ M. Al Hasani

REFUGEES

- UNHCR has maintained a collaborative relationship with authorities to safeguard the protection space and improve access to basic services and rights for people of concern across the country. Regular interaction is maintained with authorities at the national and local level, with partners and refugee community leaders. The refugee protection and assistance hotline remains operational 24 hours a day. The government has mainstreamed access for refugees into public health services, the judiciary system, and access to education, including vocational and technical skills training. However, many of these services and livelihood opportunities have been reduced because of the conflict.
- The number of persons of concern in need of financial assistance has drastically increased; in response, UNHCR has expanded its financial assistance programme to include additional categories of persons with specific needs for refugees and exceptionally some categories of asylum seekers such as single parent headed households and pregnant women. For February, in Sana'a UNHCR partner International Relief And Development (IRD) conducted 555 new assessments and 204 re-assessments for cases whose situation had deteriorated. In Aden, UNHCR partner InterSOS provided 654 cases with financial assistance (371 cases in the Basateen neighbourhood in Aden and 283 in Kharaz camp).
- In February UNHCR distributed school kits to 1,474 refugee children (762 girls and 712 boys) through the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) family centre in Sana'a. Each student received one school uniform (including a headscarf for girls), a backpack, as well as books and writing utensils.
- On 25 February, UNHCR partner Millennium Development Foundation (MDF) held an opening ceremony for child friendly spaces in Khowla, Basateen and Alghfiqi schools, which host a large number of refugee children in the Basateen neighbourhood in Aden. UNHCR, representatives from the Education Office, school management, teachers, parents, and students all participated in the event at the Alghfiqi School.
- UNHCR manages Kharaz refugee camp, which hosts some 18,000 (predominately Somali) refugees in Lahj governorate 150km west of Aden. Refugees in the camp receive WFP food rations, supplementary food items and benefit from school feeding programmes and meals for specific cases. Partners provide health care, education, water and sanitation and community services programmes.

- Resettlement has been particularly difficult due to insecurity across the country. Nevertheless, the operation has continued to identify and resettle a modest number of refugees with specific needs, such as women at risk, unaccompanied minors and separated children, and refugees with medical conditions to the United States, Sweden, France and other resettlement countries. In February, UNHCR and IOM facilitated the reuniting of a Yemeni mother and her four young children with their father in Montenegro, providing a durable solution for a family who had been separated since 2011 when the head of family had to flee Yemen in search of asylum.

NEW ARRIVALS AND MIXED MIGRATION

- In February, there were 7,705 new arrivals to the coast of Yemen (5,260 Ethiopians and 1,109 Somalis along the Arabian Sea, and 1,309 Ethiopians and 27 Somalis along the Red Sea). Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants continue to make the perilous journey from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, usually on rickety, overcrowded smugglers' boats risking their lives at sea. They are often misinformed about the severity of the conflict in Yemen and believe that the situation has become relatively calm in some of the southern governorates, or follow rumours of improved access into neighbouring Gulf countries. They land dehydrated, in shock and in need of basic assistance, and further risk abduction and exploitation, particularly along the Red Sea coast, where organized gangs and smugglers continue to operate. According to reports, various local armed groups have taken to arbitrarily detaining new arrivals on suspicion that they may join the conflict. As new arrivals make their onward movements, they risk being caught in ground fighting, airstrikes and heavily mined areas.
- UNHCR partner Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS) completed drilling a new well at Mayfa'a reception centre in Shabwah governorate in early February, which now serves new arrivals, UNHCR and partner staff, as well as the host community in Mayfa'a with water for basic hygiene, sanitation, and for washing of clothes.
- Alongside the continuing inflow, due to the conflict and ever-deepening humanitarian crisis in Yemen there has also been an outflow of 173,290 persons (over 50,000 Yemenis, 30,000 refugees – mainly Somalis, and third country nationals), who have fled to countries in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf.

IDPs

- The TFPM 7th report highlights that there have been increasing levels of displacement in areas where the conflict has continued to escalate, although there has been a relative stabilization in the internal displacement figure since the previous report in December 2015. Taizz governorate, which includes areas that have been besieged for several months, has the largest number of IDPs in the country with 555,048 individuals (23% of the total IDP population), followed by Hajjah (353,219 individuals), Sana'a (253,962 individuals), Amran (245,689 individuals) and Sa'ada (237,978 individuals). In addition, Sa'ada, Sana'a and Amran have the highest IDP to host community ratios; 33%, 21%, and 20%, respectively, while Sa'ada, subject to continued airstrikes, has suffered the largest population change with a reduction of 31% of the original population. Among the IDP population, 25% reported a priority need for shelter and shelter materials, followed by 20% for food, 20% for water, 16% for clothes, and 16% for blankets.
- Most IDPs have lost their livelihood opportunities and sought shelter with relatives and friends, in schools, public and abandoned buildings, makeshift shelters or in the open with little to no protection. UNHCR in coordination with other UN agencies is working to re-establish and expand its presence in Yemen at five strategic operational hubs each covering for a number of governorates surrounding Sana'a, Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah, Taizz/Ibb, and Aden in order to facilitate the provision of life-saving protection and assistance to persons of concern. As the lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR and partners are expanding outreach to communities with large concentrations of IDPs and their host communities by providing psycho-social, legal and cash assistance. Community-based protection networks, composed of volunteers from the IDP and host communities, are assisting with protection monitoring, information collection, awareness raising and sensitization.
- UNHCR leads the Non-Food Item (NFI), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and Shelter Cluster, and since January to the end of February, UNHCR has reached some 88,825 IDPs and other conflict-affected persons in Yemen with emergency relief assistance such as blankets, sleeping mats, plastic buckets, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, tents, and emergency shelter kits (comprised of wooden poles and planks, plastic sheeting, and tools such as hammer, axe, rope and nails). From the time of the escalation in the conflict in March 2015 until the end of 2015, UNHCR has assisted 288,060 IDPs and other conflict-affected persons in all 22 governorates in Yemen except Socotra. Despite extremely challenging circumstances, UNHCR and partners are doing their utmost to deliver essential life-saving supplies and critical protection services fully adhering to the humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have given broadly earmarked contributions to the operation and situation in 2015 and 2016: [Canada](#) | [CERF](#) | [Denmark](#) | [European Union](#) | [Germany](#) | [Humanitarian Pooled Fund Yemen](#) | [Italy](#) | [Japan](#) | [Norway](#) | [Saudi Arabia](#) | [Spain](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [UN Peacebuilding Fund](#) | [UN Programme on HIV/AIDS](#) | [United Kingdom](#) | [United States](#) | [Private Donors: Germany and Educate A Child Programme](#)

Contact: Soo Jin Hyung, External Relations Officer, hyung@unhcr.org
Mogib Hassan, Senior Public Information Assistant, abdulmo@unhcr.org

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