UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Yemen Operational Update

January - December 2025 | End-of-Year Update

At Aden Airport, Amira and Ahlam, Somali refugee children in Yemen, peek out from the bus as they begin their journey back to Somalia through UNHCR's Assisted Spontaneous Return programme - to a home they have never known.

UNHCR/ FMF

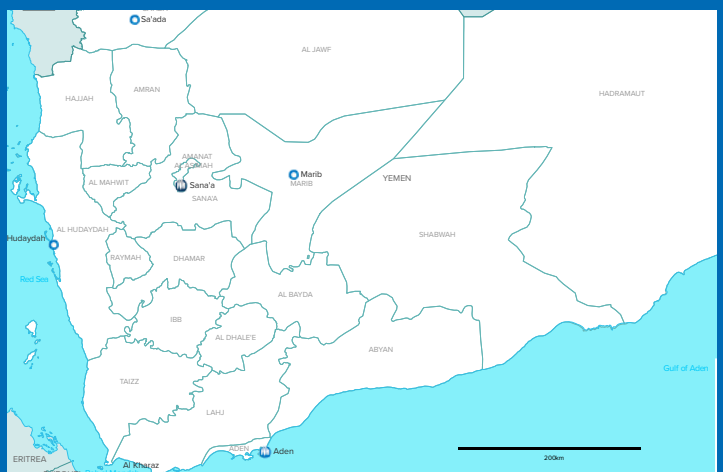
OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

In 2025, Yemen's displacement crisis continued to deepen rather than stabilize, layered on top of a decade-long emergency that has eroded services, livelihoods, and coping capacity. For millions of families, displacement was not a temporary disruption, but an ongoing reality shaped by rising poverty and weakened systems. Humanitarian needs remained exceptionally high, with 19.5 million people requiring humanitarian assistance and protection, and nearly 4.8 million Yemenis internally displaced—many for years and often in overcrowded sites or insecure shelter conditions.

Yemen also continued to host more than 63,760 registered refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority from Somalia and Ethiopia, many of whom have lived in Yemen for decades. It remains the only country on the Arabian Peninsula to have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, reflecting a longstanding tradition of protection despite the pressures of prolonged crisis.

Funding constraints remained a defining challenge throughout 2025, affecting the scale and continuity of assistance at a time when needs remained exceptionally high. In parallel, the operating environment in areas under the control of the Sana'a de facto authorities further deteriorated. Three waves of detentions of UN and humanitarian personnel were reported during the year, including one UNHCR national staff member. International staff, including the UNHCR Representative, were also temporarily detained for several days.

These developments prompted the relocation of international UN staff from Sana'a and a shift to remote working modalities. Further escalation of the security environment, including incidents affecting UN premises, led to a broader humanitarian reorganization. These constraints significantly impacted humanitarian access and the ability to sustain regular operations at scale, underscoring the importance of maintaining staff safety and minimum operational safeguards to enable continued delivery.



Towards the end of the year, political and security dynamics in Hadramawt and Al-Mahrah governorates also remained fluid, including heightened tensions in December linked to shifting control and competing authorities, reinforcing the fragility of the operating environment and the need for sustained humanitarian engagement and coordination.

COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP

In 2025, UNHCR sustained its leadership across Yemen's displacement response, ensuring protection and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers, while engaging as the three-cluster coordinating agency within the wider IDP response. As the sole mandated provider for refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR maintained critical systems for documentation, access to services and pathways to solutions.

UNHCR works through partnerships with specialized UN agencies and national and international partners to expand the reach and quality of services, supporting the inclusion of refugees in national systems and strengthening referral pathways for IDPs to access specialized assistance.

UNHCR led the Protection, Shelter/NFI and CCCM Clusters and co-led the Refugee and Migrant Multi-Sector (RMMS), strengthening coordinated and principled delivery across displacement and mixed-movement contexts.

In Al-Monig IDP site in Taiz, Wuroodi turns dried palm leaves into baskets and mats. Through UNHCR and NMO's training, she is earning an income, supporting her family, and building a more stable future.

UNHCR/ NMO

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS RESPONSE

KEEPING REFUGEES DOCUMENTED AND CONNECTED TO SERVICES

- Keeping refugees documented is an essential protection prerequisite, enabling access to territory and asylum, freedom of movement, and access to basic services. In 2025, UNHCR sustained the systems that ensure access to territory and asylum, with keeping refugees documented as an essential protection prerequisite that reduces legal insecurity and enables safe movement and access to basic services. During the year, **970 asylum-seekers** were registered by UNHCR, while **2,112 were registered by the authorities**. UNHCR issued or renewed **4,346 identity documents,** complementing **16,069 documents issued** or renewed by authorities, and supported **840 children** through birth registration procedures, helping families obtain legal proof of identity required for children to access education, health care and other essential services.
- To expand access in remote and border areas, UNHCR and the authorities conducted joint mobile registration missions to Al-Mahrah Governorate, where **1,452 families**, representing **2,718 individuals,** were registered or had documentation renewed, including new arrivals, renewals, and child additions.
- To reinforce national systems and promote consistent procedures, UNHCR trained **25 government officials** on registration standards and supported **81 authority representatives** through targeted capacity development, strengthening coordination, predictability, and protection outcomes for refugees and asylum-seekers.

PROTECTION THROUGH FAIR PROCEDURES, LEGAL AID AND DETENTION MONITORING

- Maintaining access to asylum and protection procedures remained essential in 2025. UNHCR issued **85 Refugee Status Determination** decisions, ensuring individuals seeking international protection could access fair and established decision-making processes.
- Throughout the year, UNHCR sustained legal counselling and representation to help refugees navigate documentation barriers, resolve administrative obstacles, and reduce exposure to exploitation. **216 legal awareness sessions** reached **2,733 people**, while **4,312 refugees** received individual legal assistance.
- Detention risks remained a persistent protection concern. UNHCR conducted **929 detention monitoring visits** and monitored or supported **642 detainees**, enabling protection follow-up, referrals, and advocacy where feasible.

MINI STORY: BRINGING REGISTRATION WITHIN REACH

Ali arrived early at the mobile mission point, carrying a small folder of worn paper and a school note folded into the same file. Travelling to renew documentation would have cost more than the family could afford. Through a joint UNHCR–IPNA mobile registration mission in Al-Mahrah, his household was processed alongside **1,452 households (2,718 individuals)**. Across the mission, UNHCR and partners completed **2,501 renewals**, added **120 children**, and processed **82 new registrations**, preventing risks that grow when documents expire, and families can no longer prove who they are... Watch Ali's story

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- UNHCR strengthened accountability to affected people through accessible feedback channels and sustained community engagement. In 2025, **44,452 complaints, inquiries, and feedback messages** were received through UNHCR mechanisms, enabling faster problem-solving, course correction, and more responsive service delivery. In parallel, UNHCR supported six community groups, strengthening two-way communication, outreach, and trust between communities and service providers.

CHILD PROTECTION: SAFETY, FOLLOW-UP AND WELL-BEING

- Displacement risks affect children first and often for the longest. In 2025, UNHCR prioritized child protection services designed to ensure timely identification, sustained follow-up, and longer-term well-being. **1,400 children** were supported through child protection services and best interest procedures, including **657 Best Interest Assessments**. UNHCR identified **209 unaccompanied children** and **99 separated children** and supported **299 unaccompanied** and separated children through appropriate caregiving arrangements, with **2,676 follow-up and monitoring visits** to ensure safety and continuity of care.
- In parallel, UNHCR supported children's psychosocial well-being and recovery. **2,293 children** received psychosocial support, and **1,879 children** participated in structured recreational activities. UNHCR also provided legal assistance to **323 children** and trained **25 frontline actors** on child protection and children's rights, strengthening the quality and reach of child protection responses.

MINI STORY: A FUTURE REWRITTEN

At just eight years old, Hanadi knew life on the streets more than the classroom. Homeless, undocumented, and exposed to daily danger, she and her family struggled to survive. Timely support from UNHCR partners changed everything—providing safe housing, identity documents, and access to education. Today, Hanadi never misses school, laughs with friends, and dreams of becoming a teacher—her childhood finally reclaimed.

GBV RESPONSE AND RISK MITIGATION

- UNHCR strengthened access to safe, survivor-centred gender-based violence services throughout 2025. **299 individuals** were supported to access GBV response services, including confidential referrals and follow-up care, while **1,422 people** were reached through GBV awareness and risk mitigation activities aimed at reducing exposure to harm. In parallel, UNHCR trained **25 frontline actors** to strengthen GBV response capacity, reinforcing safer and more confidential pathways for survivors.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

- UNHCR prioritized tailored protection responses for refugees facing heightened risks and compounded vulnerabilities. In 2025, **968 older refugees and 825 refugees with disabilities** received targeted assistance to address barriers to access and daily functioning, while **2,080 individuals** benefited from psychosocial support. In parallel, UNHCR assessed **3,828 households**, representing **9,423 individuals,** to identify vulnerabilities and protection risks, enabling evidence-based prioritization, referrals, and follow-up support.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AS PROTECTION

- Financial assistance remained one of UNHCR Yemen's most effective protection tools in 2025, enabling the most vulnerable families to meet basic needs and make urgent decisions with dignity. Through multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA), UNHCR supported **13,914 individuals** with predictable cash support, prioritizing families facing chronic vulnerabilities and heightened protection risks. This assistance helped reduce reliance on harmful coping strategies, including withdrawing children from school, early marriage, and taking on unsustainable debt.
- When individuals faced sudden protection risks, UNHCR provided **640 emergency** cash transfers, reaching **1,982 people**, to address immediate needs. In parallel, **1,933 individuals** received Cash for Protection linked to case management, enabling tailored financial support to respond to specific protection concerns.

HEALTH: SUSTAINING LIFE-SAVING ACCESS

- UNHCR-supported health services provided **105,555 consultations** and ensured **3,468 medical referrals** successfully accessed the requested services. UNHCR equipped or rehabilitated five health facilities and supported four staff providing psychiatric/MHPSS services at health centres, keeping mental health support within reach alongside physical care.
- Reproductive health services reached **39,838 individuals**, including **559 births** attended by skilled health workers, improving access to safe delivery care for women in vulnerable settings. In addition, **676 reproductive** health counselling sessions and **429 disease-related** counselling sessions were provided, alongside targeted support to **87 people** with high-risk medical conditions requiring specialized follow-up.
- Nutrition services supported **1,380 admissions** to supplementary feeding programmes and **367 admissions** to community-based management of acute malnutrition, prioritizing pregnant and lactating women and the most vulnerable children at heightened risk of malnutrition.

EDUCATION: PROTECTING FUTURES

- UNHCR supported refugee children to remain in school despite displacement and poverty, recognizing education as a critical protection intervention. In 2025, **7,124 children** were supported to access primary education, including **7,014 children** enrolled, while **1,023 children** were supported to access secondary education. UNHCR also supported **543 out-of-school children** to return to learning and enrolled **1,319 children** in literacy, numeracy, and language classes to address learning gaps.
- To strengthen learning environments and sustain access to education, UNHCR supported nine schools, provided incentives for **238 school management members**, and supported **53 tertiary-level** scholarships, expanding pathways to higher education and self-reliance. Looking ahead, UNHCR supported the establishment of a new pathway for refugee access to public higher education, enabling the planned enrollment of **50 refugees** at Aden University free of charge, starting in the next academic year.

LIVELIHOODS AND SKILLS

- UNHCR supported **20 refugees** to enroll in formal, certified skills training—an important new initiative with life-changing impact for individuals, whose dignity and protection increasingly depend on access to opportunities beyond assistance.

IMPROVING CONDITIONS IN KHARAZ REFUGEE CAMP

- In Kharaz Refugee Camp, opened in 2001 and the only refugee camp in Yemen, UNHCR supported practical, site-level improvements that directly affect daily life and reduce health and protection risks linked to overcrowding and environmental hazards. Located in Lahj Governorate, Kharaz refugee camp hosts nearly **9,000 refugees**, primarily from Somalia and Ethiopia, many of whom have lived in Yemen for years.
- In 2025, **9,859 people** benefited from cleaning campaigns, and **9,859 people** accessed water services aligned with Sphere standards, contributing to safer and more dignified living conditions in and around Kharaz refugee camp. UNHCR invested in sustainable infrastructure

through solarization of refugee households, the camp's water pumping system, and the UNHCR-supported health clinic, which serves refugees and nearby hosting communities.

- The solar-powered water pumping system also supported water supply for nearby hosting villages around Kharaz, improving access to essential services, reducing reliance on fuel, and supporting peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.

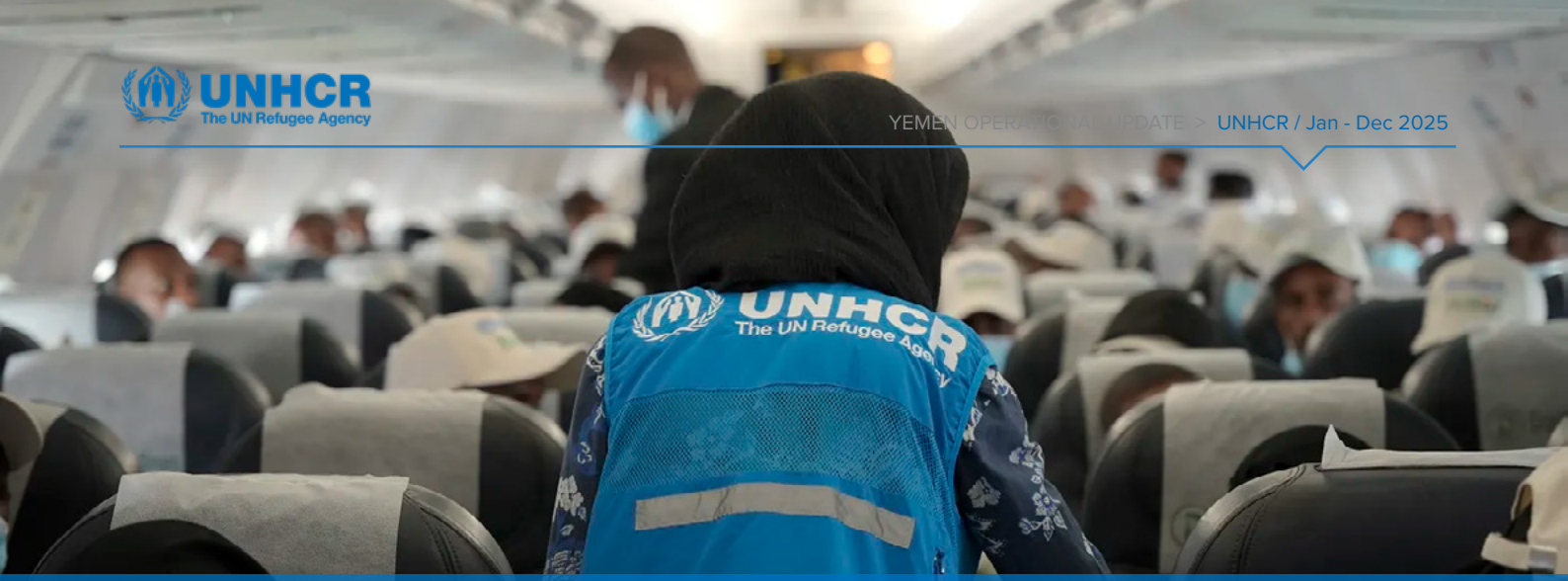
DURABLE SOLUTIONS: SAFE PATHWAYS WHEN POSSIBLE

- Despite limited global durable solutions spaces, UNHCR sustained its work on voluntary and protection-oriented solutions throughout 2025. Interest in voluntary return remained high among Somali refugees, reflecting prolonged displacement and difficult living conditions in Yemen. In response, UNHCR counselled **2,277 Somali refugees** on voluntary return, ensuring informed decision-making and protection safeguards.
- Through close coordination with UNHCR Somalia and partners, UNHCR facilitated **957 Somali refugees** to return in safety and dignity through the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme. ASR provides a safe and organized alternative to dangerous onward journeys, including irregular sea crossings, while supporting voluntary returns aligned with protection principles and individual choice.
- Resettlement remained a critical protection tool for refugees with heightened risks. In 2025, **44 refugees** were accepted for resettlement, and **42 departures** were supported. In parallel, UNHCR submitted **21 individual**s for resettlement consideration, identified **11 people** in need of resettlement, and provided **50 individuals** with cash assistance linked to resettlement processes, helping mitigate risks during prolonged procedures.

MINI STORY: RETURNING HOME AFTER YEARS IN YEMEN

At Aden International Airport, 147 Somali refugees boarded a UNHCR-supported flight to return home. For many, it was the first time in decades they would see Somalia again. Some children were travelling to a country they had never known.

Through UNHCR's Assisted Spontaneous Return programme, refugees chose to return voluntarily, with support including documentation, medical checks, transportation and reintegration assistance. For many, the journey marked a long-awaited step toward rebuilding their lives after years of displacement.....Read their story.



In 2025, 957 Somali refugees returned from Yemen to Somalia with support from UNHCR and partners. Watch thier story.
UNHCR/ FMF

MIXED MOVEMENTS: PROTECTING PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

- Yemen remains a key transit route within broader mixed movements, exposing refugees and migrants to dangerous journeys, exploitation, trafficking, and severe protection risks. Throughout 2025, UNHCR worked closely with IOM, national authorities, and partners to strengthen protection safeguards for people on the move, with a focus on early identification, referrals, and access to assistance for those stranded in high-risk conditions. UNHCR supported protection and capacity-building for frontline actors, including the Coast Guard, to improve the identification and referral of refugees and others in need of international protection. In parallel, UNHCR delivered direct protection services for people on the move, including protection counselling, documentation guidance, healthcare referrals, and targeted assistance, helping reduce exposure to harm along irregular routes.

Along Taiz's west coast, people on the move access essential protection services with support from UNHCR and its partner, the Field Medical Foundation. Watch how.
UNHCR/ FMF

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND RETURNEES

- An estimated **4.8 million people** remained internally displaced in Yemen in 2025, with displacement increasingly driven by climate-related shocks, including recurrent flooding, layered on top of protracted instability. Vulnerabilities deepened as many internally displaced Yemenis continued to face unsafe shelter, limited access to civil documentation, repeated disruption of basic services, and heightened protection risks for women and children.
- UNHCR's response focused on preventing further harm, reducing secondary displacement, and sustaining minimum conditions of safety and dignity for families living in fragile and often deteriorating environments.

LEGAL IDENTITY AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- Access to legal identity and legal aid remained critical to protecting displaced families from exclusion, avoiding eviction, and loss of housing. In 2025, UNHCR facilitated, in coordination with the Civil Registry Authority (CRA), the issuance or renewal of **7,156 ID cards**, enabling internally displaced families to access services and exercise basic rights.
- To reduce the risk of forced eviction and housing, land and property disputes, UNHCR helped avert 116 eviction cases and HLP disputes and provided targeted HLP legal assistance to **247 households**. In parallel, **3,506 individuals** received individual legal assistance to address documentation, civil, and administrative barriers, while **3,382 people** were reached through **328 legal awareness sessions,** strengthening legal knowledge and early resolution of disputes.

MINI STORY: WEAVING HOPE, THREAD BY THREAD

Displaced and struggling to care for her four children, Wurood Mohammed Ali once faced each day with uncertainty—especially as she supported a daughter in need of weekly medical treatment. Through UNHCR-supported palm frond weaving training implemented by NMO, Wurood gained practical skills, confidence, and a source of income. Today, she weaves traditional handicrafts, supports her family, and dreams of teaching other women—turning fragile palm leaves into strength, dignity, and hope.

GBV RESPONSE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

- UNHCR strengthened access to survivor-centered gender-based violence services and community-based support throughout 2025. **384 survivors and individuals** at risk were referred to appropriate services through safe and confidential pathways, while **3,642 people** were reached through GBV awareness and risk-mitigation activities aimed at reducing exposure to harm. In parallel, UNHCR supported **five community-based social activities** involving **101 participants**, reinforcing peer support, social cohesion, and protective community networks.

CHILD PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- UNHCR strengthened child protection responses by ensuring timely identification, referral, and follow-up for children at risk. In 2025, **678 children** were referred to critical protection services, while **3,645 children** participated in structured recreational activities that support safety, resilience, and social development. In parallel, **811 children** received psychosocial support to address distress linked to displacement, and **23 frontline actors** were trained on child protection and children's rights, strengthening the quality of care and referral pathways.

MINI STORY: SAFE SPACES FOR CHILDREN

At an IDP site, children gathered in a circle to play—something simple, yet rare in displacement. Structured recreational activities provided a safe space for children to interact and regain a sense of routine. For parents, it offered a moment of relief.

UNHCR and its partner rehabilitated children's spaces, improving safety and living conditions for hundreds of families.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION NETWORKS

- UNHCR strengthened community-based protection by supporting **214 Community-Based Protection Network** teams, enabling early identification of risks and timely referrals at community level. In 2025, these **networks** conducted **531 awareness activities** and facilitated **15,552 referrals** to specialized services, helping connect people to protection, legal, health, and social support.
- In parallel, UNHCR received **22,778 feedback messages** and inquiries through community and accountability mechanisms, ensuring that responses remained responsive to community priorities and emerging protection concerns.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- UNHCR supported **62,369 individuals** through multipurpose cash assistance and provided emergency cash to **4,899 individuals** through **900 emergency cash transfers**, enabling families to meet urgent needs, including rent, food, transport, and health-related expenses. Post-distribution monitoring indicated that most recipients used cash assistance primarily for food purchases, underscoring the role of financial support in helping families cope with food insecurity and rising living costs.

IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY AND LINKING PEOPLE TO SERVICES

- Systematic vulnerability assessments remained central to UNHCR's protection response, ensuring assistance and services reached those most at risk. In 2025, UNHCR assessed **33,234 households,** representing **202,316 individuals**, to identify socio-economic vulnerabilities and protection risks. These assessments enabled targeted referrals and follow-up, including support for **723 people** with disabilities and **2,509 individuals** with specific needs. In parallel, **3,525 individuals** received psychosocial support to address distress linked to displacement and ongoing hardship.

SHELTER AND SITE SUPPORT

- UNHCR supported safe and dignified shelter solutions for an estimated **60,000 displaced individuals** in 2025, based on an average household size of six, reducing exposure to weather, overcrowding, and insecurity. This included support to **838 households** (approximately **5,000 individuals**) through house rehabilitation or reconstruction, with **745 homes repaired**, enabling safer living conditions and supporting voluntary returns where feasible.
- In parallel, UNHCR provided **2,761 transitional shelters**, benefiting an estimated **16,500**

individuals, supported 2,115 households (approximately 12,700 individuals) with emergency shelter kits through cash assistance, and assisted 4,385 households (approximately 26,300 individuals) with shelter maintenance and upgrades to preserve minimum living standards. Across displacement sites, 77,810 individuals benefited from site monitoring and coordination services, while 9,408 households (approximately 56,400 individuals) received essential non-food items, helping families maintain basic living conditions in protracted displacement.

MINI STORY: WHERE A HOUSE BECAME A HOME AGAIN

When conflict destroyed Hamid's home in Harib, Marib, it also tore his family apart. At just 19, Hamid became the head of a household of 13, carrying the weight of loss, displacement, and responsibility far beyond his years. Years of separation and instability followed—until UNHCR-supported rehabilitation restored their damaged home. Today, the family is reunited under one roof, finding safety, dignity, and healing where rubble once stood.

QUICK IMPACT PROJECTS AND CLIMATE ACTION

- UNHCR implemented 31 Quick Impact Projects, benefiting more than 105,000 internally displaced people through community-based interventions that addressed urgent needs and strengthened resilience. This included climate-focused QIPs that reduced exposure to environmental hazards, improved basic infrastructure, and supported safer living conditions for displaced families in high-risk areas.

MINI STORY: WHEN WATER COMES CLOSER TO HOME

In Al Jarshi site, the day used to start with a long walk for water, often multiple trips. When the water well was rehabilitated and a solar pumping system installed, water became reliable again. The project improved sustainable access for 792 people, reducing daily burden and the protection risks linked to water collection.

UNHCR also supported environmental improvements in Al Azraqeen site, benefiting 3,975 people, reducing risks through cleaning and waste management. In Hajjah and Al Hudaydah, latrine construction projects improved safe sanitation access for persons with disabilities and vulnerable women—strengthening privacy, dignity and safety.

UNHCR and its partner Human Access supported vocational training in mobile phone maintenance.
UNHCR/Human Access

FUNDING CONSTRAINTS (2025)

- Funding levels in 2025 were insufficient to match needs and rising vulnerabilities across Yemen, affecting the scale and continuity of key interventions. UNHCR Yemen's operational requirements for 2025 totaled **USD 305.0 million**, yet the operation was only **17 per cent funded**, severely constraining the ability to sustain assistance at the level required—particularly cash-based support and essential protection services.
- At the system-wide level, the Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (YHNRP) 2025 was also significantly underfunded, with **USD 713.6 million** received against requirements of **USD 2.48 billion** (**28.8 per cent funded**)—limiting the collective ability of humanitarian partners to respond at scale.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

- The humanitarian trajectory is expected to worsen. People in need are projected to increase from **19.5 million** in 2025 to **22.3 million** in 2026, reflecting deepening socio-economic pressures and rising vulnerabilities across sectors. Internal displacement is also expected to rise from **4.8 million to 5.2 million people**, further increasing pressure on services, livelihoods and shelter conditions for affected communities.
- In this context, UNHCR will maintain a prioritized, protection-led posture, focused on legal identity, core protection services, targeted financial assistance, as well as emergency and shelter support where funding allows, to reduce immediate risks and prevent negative coping mechanisms. UNHCR will continue its cluster leadership and RMMS co-leadership to support coherent, principled delivery across Yemen. Sustained and flexible funding will be essential to preserve minimum safeguards and protect life-saving outcomes for the most vulnerable.

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