

PLACE

Aden, Yemen

DATE

13 November 2024

EU Humanitarian Funding Restores Dignity and Access for Displaced Yemenis through Identity Cards



Mariam recently received a new ID card, allowing her to secure birth certificates for her children, enroll them in school and reclaim access to her property. © SHS/Ayman Zaki

UNHCR's civil documentation initiative in Yemen, funded by the European Union (EU) through its Humanitarian Aid Operations, is helping thousands of those forcibly displaced in Yemen secure essential identity cards (ID), restoring their identity, dignity, and access to vital social services and humanitarian assistance.

Yemen – The UNHCR-supported civil documentation initiative in Yemen, funded by the EU, is improving lives by helping internally displaced persons (IDPs) secure essential legal documentation. In a country marked by prolonged instability, ID cards are a vital lifeline for displaced families, providing for confirmed identity, ensuring access to humanitarian services, education, healthcare, legal protection, their properties, and freedom of movement.

This activity is the first step in ensuring access to essential services. It focuses on raising awareness about the importance of legal identity. With nearly 5,000 ID cards issued under the project, UNHCR continues to advocate for enhanced support to ensure that displaced families can secure their rights and rebuild their lives.

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Mariam, a 45-year-old mother of ten living in Ammar Bin Yasser camp, is one of the many Yemenis benefiting from the UNHCR-EU civil documentation project. After attending an awareness session by UNHCR's partner SHS, she received an ID card within ten days, enabling her to secure birth certificates, enroll her children in school, and regain access to her property.

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"The awareness sessions gave me hope and strength. I was anonymous... and now I have an identity," Mariam shared.

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UNHCR Yemen Representative, Marin Kajdomcaj, emphasized the importance of this initiative:

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"In Yemen, the absence of legal documentation not only limits access to humanitarian services but also undermines dignity, protection, access to property, and impacts individual's security, limiting freedom of movement. This project is a critical step in addressing these barriers. We are grateful for the European Union's support, which makes this essential work possible."

Muriel Cornelis, the EU Humanitarian Aid Head of Office in Sana'a adds:

"Access to identity and civil documentation for all is a priority for the European Union. Lack of documentation has a negative impact on affected communities' access to rights, basic services as well as humanitarian assistance, especially the poorest and traditionally marginalized groups. The conflict has made the situation worse, leading to further exclusion and marginalisation. As European Union, we support UNHCR and other partners in this endeavour and we advocate directly with authorities to facilitate access to the relevant documentation for everyone, regardless their status, or place of origin".

This project is part of a larger EU-funded initiative, implemented by UNHCR and its partners, to provide protection services for refugees and displaced Yemenis. Over the course of the year, it aims to reach more than 28,000 people, addressing critical needs for refugees and asylum seekers in areas such as registration, legal assistance, access to justice, child protection, and gender-based violence response.

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The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. Founded in 1950, UNHCR works in over 130 countries, providing life-saving assistance such as shelter, food, and water, helping safeguard fundamental human rights, and developing solutions that ensure people have a safe place to call home, where they can build a better future.

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The European Union and its Member States are among the world's leading donors of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need all around the world. It aims to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by disasters and human-induced crises. Through the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission, the European Union helps millions of victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, the EU provides assistance to the most vulnerable people on the basis of humanitarian needs.

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