



Yemen. Wathiq's daughters at Al-Manij camp after the family fled their home in search of safety, © Nahda Makers Organization/Ahmed Al-Basha.

Yemen: Escalating Protection Risks

Displacement, access constraints and mounting pressure on internally displaced people, refugees and host communities



174,000

People internally displaced in connection with the West Coast escalation



191,064

People internally displaced since the beginning of the year



9,800

Refugees and asylum seekers hosted in Kharaz camp



12,823

People reached with protection interventions

Source dates in the underlying country input: displacement figures as of 3 October 2026.

Situation at a glance

The latest military escalation in Yemen has displaced growing numbers of people at an alarming rate, worsening an already severe humanitarian crisis and intensifying existing protection concerns. Families uprooted from the West Coast, Taiz, Lahj and Marib are fleeing their homes carrying limited belongings while facing insecurity, high transportation costs, and shortages of food, water and medicines. Host communities continue to provide support; however, reduced assistance,

increasing pressure on already overstretched services, and competition over limited resources risk weakening social cohesion. Many of the newly displaced families have already experienced multiple waves of displacement, further exhausting their coping capacities, depleting their resources, and increasing their exposure to protection risks. As the conflict and insecurity intensify, displacement patterns are expanding beyond traditional hotspots, with growing movements from Taiz towards Lahj, Aden and Abyan, placing additional pressure on host communities, public services and humanitarian response capacities.

Protection risks for internally displaced people

- Many displacement sites, including IDP locations, are situated in or near active conflict zones, exposing displaced populations to ongoing risks from airstrikes, shelling, landmines and unexploded ordnance.
- Women, girls and children face heightened risks of violence, harassment, exploitation, trafficking, forced and early marriage, child labour and interrupted education, particularly where sites lack privacy, lighting and safe sanitation.
- People without valid civil documentation face barriers to movement, assistance, services and legal identity. Repeated displacement and economic hardship are also increasing psychological distress.
- Humanitarian access is constrained by insecurity, damaged roads, disrupted communications and severe underfunding, delaying assessments, referrals and the delivery of assistance along key routes between the West Coast, Taiz and Aden. Only 60 per cent of health facilities nationwide remain fully operational.

Displacement pattern and affected locations

As of 3 October, Taiz hosted 16,278 displaced households, followed by Lahj with 6,481, Aden with 3,338, Al Hodeidah¹ with 1,374 and Abyan with 928. While these figures represent the best available estimates, displacement monitoring challenges and access constraints may result in underreporting in some locations. The reported figure for Al Hodeidah is particularly likely to underestimate actual displacement due to monitoring limitations since 9 September.

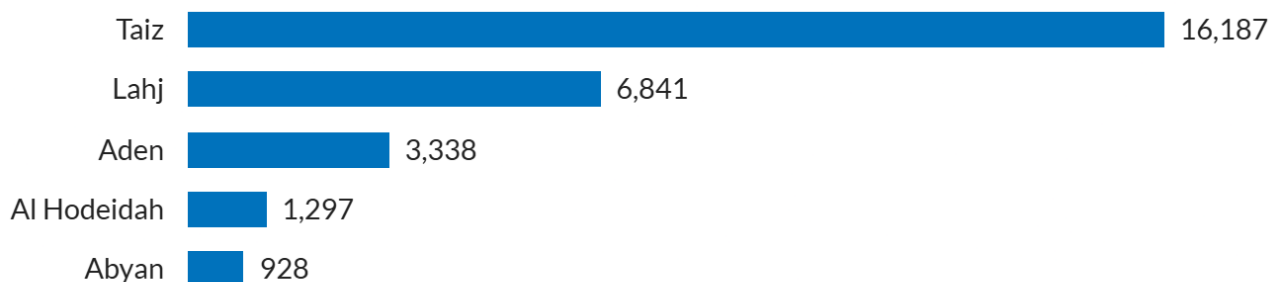
Rapid-response assessments conducted by partners identified newly displaced families across multiple sites, including families in sites managed by UNHCR partners.

While most displacement has remained within Taiz, a growing proportion of families are moving further towards Lahj, Aden and Abyan as the geographic footprint of displacement widens.

¹ The reported figure for Al Hodeidah is likely to underestimate actual displacement due to limitations in displacement monitoring since 9 September.

Figure 1: More than half of displaced households are in Taiz

Displaced households by governorate, as of 3 October 2026



Source: UNHCR Yemen country input

Protection risks for refugees and asylum-seekers

- In and around Kharaz Camp, while there are no military activities inside the refugee camp, intensified military activities in the region, movement restrictions and security checks have increased insecurity and disrupted access to services and livelihoods. On 5 October, education services resumed in the camp after being disrupted for weeks.
- Assisted return movements for Somali refugees were initially postponed due to movement restrictions linked to security concerns. Deteriorating security and livelihood conditions may affect refugees' ability to make free and informed decisions about return. The program resumed on 30 September transporting over 100 Somalis back to their country, with additional movements planned in the next few days.
- Registration, documentation and movement are increasingly difficult because of insecurity, checkpoints, high transportation costs and access constraints. Refugees without valid documents are especially exposed to administrative barriers and possible arrest or detention.
- Women, children, older people and persons with disabilities face disproportionate limitations and heightened protection risks, while misinformation and scams related to assistance and documentation remain a concern. Access to legal procedures and government services remains challenging, particularly in Lahj, where the closure or reduced functioning of some institutions has affected refugees in Kharaz Camp.

Movements from Yemen

3,986

approximate arrivals in Djibouti

187

approximate arrivals in Somalia

Yemenis, Ethiopian and Somalis are fleeing Yemen to Djibouti and Somalia. The source records approximately 3,986 arrivals in Djibouti, with women, children and older people comprising more than 60 per cent. It also records around 187 arrivals in Somalia.

Response and critical gaps

Protection partners are conducting rapid assessments, case management, referrals, psychosocial support, legal counselling, documentation support, community outreach and emergency cash assistance. Services for refugees and asylum-seekers also include health referrals, education continuity support, support for persons with specific needs and monitoring of movements and protection incidents. Registration and documentation remain operational in Government of Yemen areas, subject to security and access constraint.

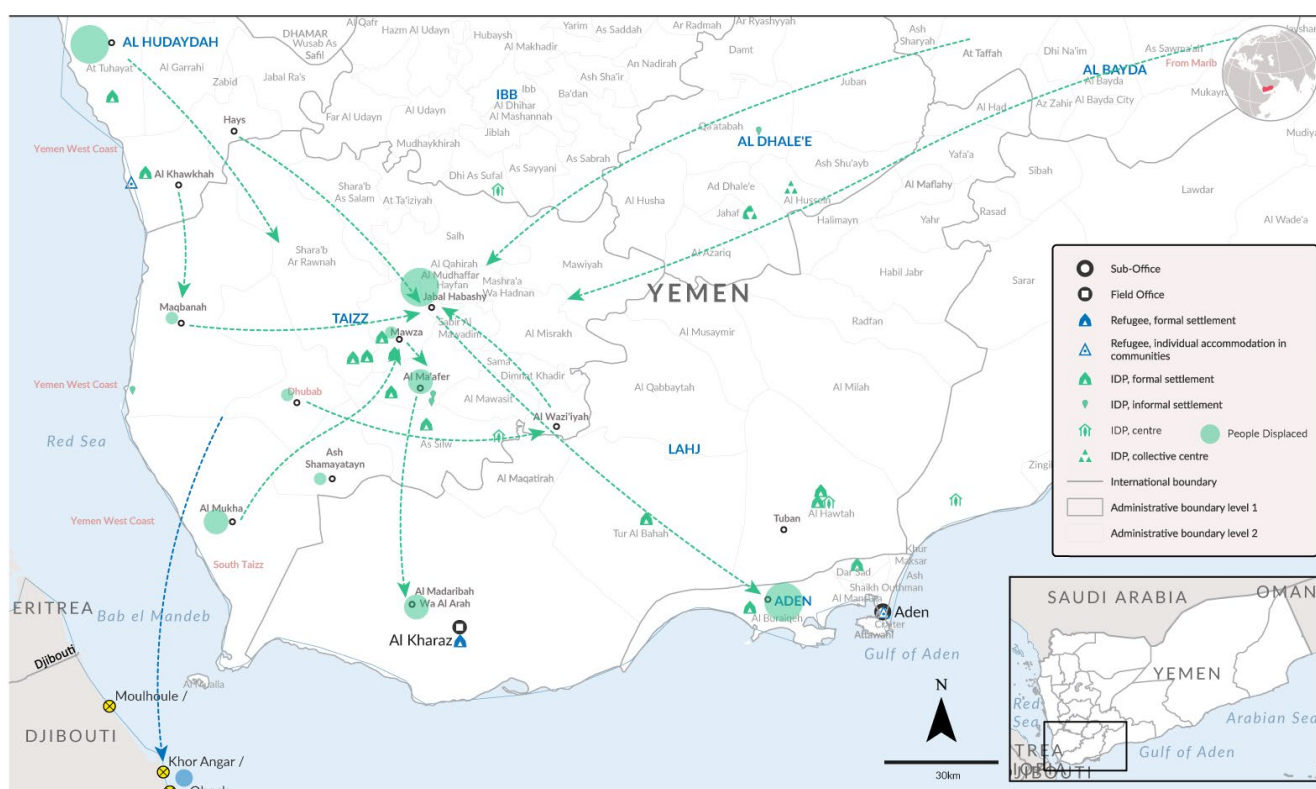


Figure 3: The Protection Cluster has reached a far smaller share of its target than in 2025

Share of target population reached by the Protection Cluster

2025

40%



Reached 40% Not reached 60%

2026 • BY JULY

11%



Reached 11% Not reached 89%

Source: UNHCR Yemen country input

Even before the latest escalation, protection response capacity was severely constrained. By July 2026, the Protection Cluster had reached only 11 per cent of its target population, compared with 40 per cent in 2025. Funding shortfalls are now further limiting the response, with critical gaps in protection monitoring, support for women and girls, child protection and other essential services.

Immediate priorities

Protect civilians and preserve humanitarian space.

Ensure safe, unimpeded access to affected areas and maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps, including Kharaz.

Maintain access to registration, documentation and solutions..

Sustain registration and civil documentation and preserve access to voluntary return, resettlement and complementary pathways based on informed individual choice.

Scale up flexible, needs-based financing.

Expand cash assistance, shelter, core relief items, WASH, legal services, child protection, GBV services, mental health support and livelihoods for displaced people, refugees and host communities.

Make displacement sites and routes safer.

Integrate safety audits, lighting, gender-segregated sanitation and explosive ordnance risk mitigation into site planning, and expand risk education, clearance and survivor assistance.

Voices from affected communities

“

Even though we have been displaced five times before, we never faced this level of uncertainty and hardship.

”

A father of five who fled Al Makha with his family at night.

The source says they walked more than 10 kilometers, remained stranded for three days and eventually reached Marib after repeated displacement.

“

I gave birth 11 days ago, but since we were displaced, I have not been able to access enough nutritious food to support myself and breastfeed my newborn.

”

A 22-year-old mother displaced from Maqbana District, quoted anonymously in the underlying country input.

The source reports that she fled with her newborn amid nearby shelling and lacked maternal health care, clean water and essential infant-care items during the journey.

About this brief

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