

Yemen Situation: UNHCR Emergency Update

Djibouti | Somalia | Yemen

22 September 2026



A UNHCR staff member visits a site in Obock, Djibouti, hosting Yemeni refugee families who arrived by boat after fleeing intensified hostilities on Yemen's western coast. © UNHCR.

Highlights

- [Escalating hostilities in Yemen](#) have driven significant displacement within the country and cross-border movements across the Gulf of Aden, with close to **130,000 people internally displaced** inside Yemen¹ and **over 3,000 people crossing** to Djibouti². Arrivals in Somalia remain smaller but are gradually increasing, including Yemeni refugees and Somali refugee returnees.
- In response to the evolving situation, UNHCR has declared a **Level 1 emergency for Yemen, Djibouti and Somalia** for three months and is scaling up preparedness and response across the affected operations.
- In Yemen, UNHCR is taking part to the inter-agency response under the Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). In light of the recent escalation, UNHCR requires **USD 25 million** to support an estimated **231,000 people** with protection services including monitoring, legal assistance and support for people at heightened risk, cash assistance, shelter and core relief items (CRIs) inside Yemen.
- In Djibouti, UNHCR with the Government of Djibouti, developed an **interagency appeal** for a total amount of **USD 13.5 million**. The plan reflects a coordinated inter-agency approach covering activities among agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM and UNHCR) in support of 10,000 individuals (2,500 households) over a six-month period.

¹ [Source IOM/DTM as of 20 September.](#)

² [CORE Update - Yemen Situation: Displacement overview.](#)

Country Updates

YEMEN

Operational developments

- **Close to 130,000 people are currently displaced inside Yemen.** Families have fled with limited belongings and urgently need shelter, food, clean water, health care and protection services.
- Taiz remains the epicenter of the crisis, accounting for **more than 60%** of the overall displacement, with many families remaining within the governorate itself, unable to move forward due to fighting, blocked roads, or lack of means of transportation. More displacement is reported from Al Jawf, Marib and Al Hodeidah, reflecting the expanding, multi-front nature of the conflict.
- Most newly displaced families have sought refuge in Aden, Lahj, Abyan and Al Dhale'e governorates and even Marib, with more than **90,000 people** arriving in these areas. Conditions for displaced families are increasingly dire as they arrive to **already congested displacement sites** with urgent needs for shelter, food, clean water, healthcare and protection, placing additional pressure on already fragile services and infrastructure.
- **Hostilities have affected refugees and asylum-seekers.** Around Kharaz refugee camp, new displacement has placed additional pressure on health and water services, while registration and education activities have been disrupted. In Marib, UNHCR and partners are providing **protection monitoring, legal aid, child protection, services addressing gender-based violence and emergency cash assistance** to affected refugee and asylum-seeker households.
- The escalation compounds an already severe humanitarian situation with **22.3 million people requiring humanitarian assistance and protection services, and Yemen hosting 5.2 million internally displaced** and some **63,000 refugees and asylum-seekers** prior to the latest escalation.

Key elements of the response

- UNHCR remains operational in Yemen and coordinates the **Protection and the Shelter, Land and Site Coordination Clusters**, working with national authorities and partners to monitor population movements, assess needs and support a coordinated response.
- UNHCR has already provided emergency multipurpose cash assistance to **200 newly displaced households**, with immediate support planned for 1,000 households. With more than **70%** of displaced households living in emergency or inadequate shelters, emergency shelter cash assistance is planned for **500 households**, while preparations are underway to distribute **1,000 shelter repair kits**.
- **Protection monitoring, rapid assessments, referrals and case management continue** where access permits. In Aden, a joint assessment of the new Al-Ferdous displacement site identified **urgent water, sanitation, food, shelter, basic relief item and documentation needs**, as well as **serious safety concerns** linked to nearby areas contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war.

DJIBOUTI

Operational developments

- Intensifying conflict along Yemen's western coast has **forced thousands** to cross the Bab el-Mandeb Strait into Djibouti. Since early September, approximately 3,000 refugees have arrived through Obock, Khor Angar, Moulhoule and Godoria. Between 12 and 16 September, 174 individuals from 46 households were registered, with newly arrived Yemenis granted prima facie refugee recognition, facilitating access to protection and assistance.
- Many refugees arrive exhausted after difficult sea crossings and with few belongings, with **women, children and older persons comprising a significant proportion of arrivals**.

Djibouti continues to maintain an open-border approach. On 13 September, a high-level government delegation led by the Prime Minister visited Obock to assess the situation and reaffirm the Government's commitment to protecting and assisting new arrivals, while highlighting the need for increased international support.

Key elements of the response

- In Djibouti, UNHCR is supporting the Government and the Office National pour les Réfugiés et les Sinistrés (ONARS) in **receiving, registering and assisting refugees** arriving from Yemen. The response is coordinated by the Prefecture of Obock with support from national authorities, UN agencies and humanitarian partners. Refugees arriving through coastal entry points are transferred to Markazi refugee village, where registration, documentation and assistance are ongoing.
- UNHCR teams in Obock continue to support newly arrived refugees through **transportation, temporary shelter, core relief items, health and protection services**. Protection interventions include monitoring, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, and community-based protection activities, while UNHCR, ONARS and partners continue to strengthen referral mechanisms. Identification wristbands have been introduced and the first identity documents issued. Although Markazi currently has capacity for around 5,000 additional refugees, planning figures have risen to more than 10,000 potential arrivals, increasing pressure on available reception capacity.
- WFP is providing **fortified cereals and integrating new arrivals into food assistance**, while the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity (MASS), supported by IOM and the Djibouti Red Crescent, is distributing hot meals, food and drinking water. Qatar Charity plans additional relief items and shelter support. A MASS census recorded 2,380 people at the site.
- Health services are being strengthened, with the Ministry of Health **deploying additional personnel and establishing a triage centre, while malnutrition screening continues**. UNFPA and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are providing additional medical supplies and capacity, and the Djibouti Red Crescent (DRC) is providing first aid at the port. Partners are also strengthening prevention measures in response to scabies and heightened diarrhoeal disease risks linked to overcrowding, including the installation of handwashing stations at reception sites.
- UNHCR-supported ONARS has **relocated 80 vulnerable families from the transit hangar to tents**. Of the approximately 700 tents required for 698 families, 127 are currently available, with a further 32 provided by IOM en route. Sanitation and water supply are being expanded, while vulnerable individuals remaining in the transit hangar continue to require appropriate shelter. Host families are also accommodating refugees as reception capacity expands.
- WASH services are being expanded in Markazi, with UNICEF supporting **additional water storage and distribution infrastructure**, the Djiboutian Agency for Social Development (ADDs) expanding the water network, and the Djibouti Red Crescent (DRC) installing handwashing stations. 26 latrines have been completed, while further improvements to sanitation, wastewater drainage and waste management are underway.
- As arrivals continue, reception capacity at Markazi is coming under increasing pressure. Many of the new arrivals are children, and UNHCR is working with the Government to facilitate their inclusion in already overstretched local schools. Additional support is urgently required to expand reception capacity and sustain access to water, shelter, education and other essential services.

SOMALIA

Operational developments

- Conflict and instability in Yemen continue to drive movements across the Gulf of Aden, with authorities in Somaliland and Puntland reporting a gradual increase in arrivals and strengthening preparedness for a potential escalation. Since the beginning of September, authorities recorded 110 arrivals in Bossaso, including Yemeni nationals and Somali

returnees, while Somaliland registered 28 arrivals, comprising 22 Yemeni refugees and six Ethiopian nationals who have since returned to Ethiopia.

- Authorities are developing contingency scenarios for larger movements, with the Somaliland Ministry of Resettlement and Humanitarian Affairs (MoRHA) projecting an additional 10,000 to 15,000 arrivals, while the Puntland Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Democratization (MoIFAD) anticipates around 2,500 Yemeni refugees and 8,000 Somali returnees. In consultation with UNHCR Yemen and Djibouti, UNHCR Somalia is planning for up to 5,000 new refugee arrivals. While adverse weather and limited maritime crossings currently constrain movements, humanitarian partners expect arrivals to increase as sea conditions improve.

Key elements of the response

- UNHCR continues to work closely with authorities in Somaliland and Puntland to **strengthen preparedness and response capacity**. In Somaliland, through MoRHA, UNHCR supports a reception centre in Berbera capable of accommodating up to 300 new arrivals for up to three nights. New arrivals receive temporary accommodation, food assistance, registration, documentation and onward transportation to Hargeisa.
- In Bossaso, the reception centre managed by MoIFAD can accommodate up to **500 individuals**. Services include **reception and orientation, registration and documentation, protection screening, referrals to health care, psychosocial support and legal assistance**.
- In anticipation of a potential increase in arrivals, UNHCR has **strengthened monitoring and coordination with authorities in Somaliland and Puntland**, enhanced information-sharing mechanisms, and intensified contingency planning. Attention is being given to protection risks associated with maritime arrivals, including child protection concerns, family separation, documentation needs and access to asylum.
- UNHCR is engaging with government counterparts, the Resident Coordinator's Office and humanitarian partners to **strengthen preparedness and ensure a coordinated response** to any further increase in arrivals.

Coordination

Across Yemen, Djibouti and Somalia, UNHCR and partners are updating contingency plans against agreed displacement scenarios to strengthen preparedness and ensure readiness to scale up the response as the situation evolves.

Financial Information

UNHCR operations across the affected regions remain critically underfunded at a time when humanitarian needs and operational risks are increasing.

- **In Yemen**, underfunding continues to constrain the response. UNHCR's 2026 requirements of USD 193.6 million are **only 18% funded**, limiting cash assistance and essential protection services. Meanwhile, the Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (YHNRP) 2026 is only close to 21% **funded** against the USD 2.16 billion required, limiting the wider humanitarian response.
- **In Djibouti and Somalia**, limited funding is constraining the humanitarian response. UNHCR's 2026 financial requirements are only 15% funded in both operations. Djibouti faces a funding gap of USD 10.7 million against requirements of USD 12.6 million, while Somalia faces a USD 93.3 million gap against requirements of USD 110 million, limiting capacity to meet humanitarian needs.

Contact Information

For further information on the situation or UNHCR's response across affected countries, please contact the Regional Bureaux: RBESA-EE@unhcr.org (Eastern and Southern Africa Region) and menareporting@unhcr.org (Middle East and North Africa).

For more information on UNHCR's response across affected countries, please visit [Operational Data Portal](#) and [UNHCR website](#).