

YEMEN SITUATION

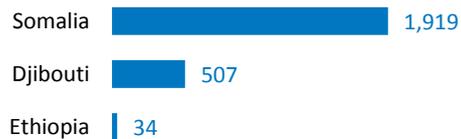
UNHCR CRISIS UPDATE #2

22/04/2015

Highlights

- The situation across much of Yemen remains alarming as airstrikes damage public service buildings, gas stations, power plants, water mains, homes, hotels, food markets, shops; the UNHCR office in Sana'a also suffered damages as did the Bureau for Refugee Affairs (BRA).
- Shortages of fuel is the key challenge in reaching the people of concern while cessation of most public services, little to no electricity, and a lack of food, water, and medicine in many parts of the country are now the norm.
- 600 families have benefited from UNHCR cash assistance since the beginning of the airstrikes.
- UNHCR is the lead agency for the emergency related to the Yemen Crisis in Somalia and Djibouti, registering 1,919 arrivals in Puntland (1,132 persons) and Somaliland (787 persons), 507 in Djibouti, and 34 arrivals to Ethiopia since 27 March.
- On 17 April the Flash Appeal was launched requesting 273.7 million USD to aid Yemen's 7.5 million people over three months; the current planning figure includes 120,000 to 150,000 internally displaced people and 250,000 refugees.

Departure destinations from Yemen (mixed nationalities)



Operational Context

As Yemen continues to slide further into conflict, greater numbers of displaced people within and beyond the borders are being reported. Critical shortages of fuel, water, and food mean that communication and travel to safer areas are severely hampered. In addition to general breakdown of safety and security in Aden, the city of Sa'ada came under fierce attack leaving a multitude of public buildings in shambles. A massive explosion in Sana'a on 20 April further damaged infrastructure including the UNHCR office. The Bureau for Refugee Affairs (a government entity) in Sana'a was also damaged in a separate incident. Post offices, gas stations, telecommunication centres, and homes have been affected and in many cases destroyed. The airports in Aden and Sa'ada are damaged beyond operational use, leaving Sana'a the only airport for humanitarian purposes.

While gathering information on displacements is proving more difficult than ever, the number of civilians displaced by the escalation of violence in Yemen in the last few weeks is provisionally estimated at between 120,000 and 150,000 people. This figure is expected to rise significantly if violence continues, and is in addition to the 300,000 Yemenis already displaced by previous violence, many of whom have fled for a second time, including the residents of an IDP camp in Mazraq that was subject to airstrikes. Many of the 250,000 refugees hosted in Yemen are also affected.

The lack of fuel also restricts the patrolling of the coast and the assistance to new arrivals landing on the coasts of the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf. UNHCR's partners, the Yemeni Red Crescent and Society for Humanitarian Solidarity, report an acute shortage of fuel. However, boats carrying migrants and asylum seekers are still arriving to Yemen despite the ongoing conflict.

Since the beginning of the Yemen crisis, there has been some movement of people fleeing Yemen to both Somalia and Djibouti. Though the influx remains limited, UNHCR Somalia anticipates that this can change rapidly and is preparing accordingly. The first arrivals from Yemen were registered on 27 March – and the most recent arrivals on 19 April.

Response in Yemen

Protection

Within UNHCR's Protection Response, a key priority is putting in place a displacement monitoring system to map movements in and out of Yemen. This will allow for a systematized collection of information at departure and arrival points to inform protection responses.

Refugee Programme

Despite the lack of fuel and electricity, many activities in Kharaz refugee camp are ongoing. UNHCR's partner Intersos continues to provide counseling to newly arrived refugees in the camp. UNHCR's partners' field staff (Association for Developing Persons with Specific Needs) provides outreach to children with disabilities and their parents and continue to run the early intervention centre. However, as a result of fuel shortages, this same partner was forced to stop physiotherapy activities. Also, it is becoming difficult to maintain the cold storage for drugs in the camp clinic. Despite these constraints, basic services continue to be provided. On 18 April, 132 families (229 persons) received a food ration for one month. Their registration in the camp was reactivated after some have returned from urban areas to the camp due to the security situation. However, as the conflict escalates in urban areas, fewer refugee families are able to travel back to Kharaz camp.

IDP Programme and Assessments

Despite facing incredible difficulties to access people of concern, UNHCR's partners in Sana'a have reached over 600 families with cash assistance since the beginning of the airstrikes. Recipients include Somalis (224), Syrians (147), Ethiopians, (85), Eritreans (22), Iraqis (13), and Ivorian, Palestinian, and Sudanese families. The majority of the families required support for older family members and other vulnerabilities, including 20 families with survivors of SGBV. Partners also reached 102 families with child protection activities, including 33 unaccompanied children, 28 foster families caring for young unaccompanied and separated children, and 41 families with children with disabilities.

Ad hoc assessments in public buildings and schools also reveal that, in terms of life sustaining items, mattresses and blankets are key priorities. UNHCR, through its partners, will start distribution of such materials and other non-food items this week to displaced families in schools or collective centres, particularly in Aden where road access may be feasible. Distributions will be provided to families based on vulnerability criteria.

Despite swift deterioration of safety, security and access across Yemen, Multi-cluster, Inter-agency, and Initial Rapid Assessments (MIRA) have been conducted in Al Hajjah, Al Dhale, Aden, and Abyan governorates. UNHCR has been engaged in the development of the MIRA questionnaires, analysis of assessment findings in the protection and shelter/CCCM/NFIs clusters, and engagement of partners in the assessments related to the two clusters. From these assessments, the following information can be concluded: top priorities across districts are safety, food, WASH, and



UNHCR's partner Charitable Society for Social Welfare provides hot meals to displaced families now sheltered in school buildings in Sana'a. CSSW / 19 April, 2015.

shelter. While health is not among the top three priorities across districts, it is the second and third priority in two specific districts. Partners with health capacity may be requested to intervene in these districts, security pending.

In Hajjah, the assessments revealed that shelter support was one of the three greatest needs (alongside food, and clean water and sanitation). 103 out of 111 people whom assessment teams contacted in the Hajjah area (including displaced, host community members, health workers, women, shop keepers and local leaders) said access to adequate shelter was a serious problem and many people did not have a decent place to live. Over half of this group is living in shelters made from scavenged pieces of wood, tin or other discarded items. In some areas, such as Mustaba, everyone who UNHCR's partners spoke to was living in this kind of makeshift home. Elsewhere people are living in tents, with relatives, or public buildings. In several locations people are living in the open without any shelter at all. Many said their homes were uninhabitable, damaged by airstrikes. Some were living in their damaged homes.

Departures from Yemen

A steady flow of people continue to flee Yemen by boat for the Horn of Africa and cross land borders into Saudi Arabia. A total of 2,426 people have now arrived in Djibouti and Somalia's Somaliland and Puntland, mostly by boat over the past few weeks. Somalia has received 1,919 people fleeing Yemen to both Puntland and Somaliland. Of these, over 250 are Yemenis while the majority is Somali nationals. Only a few of the Somalis were previously registered refugees with UNHCR in Yemen. Recent arrivals to Bossaso port in Puntland departed from Al Mukalla port in Yemen, including women and children. There have been 507 arrivals into Djibouti. This brings the total number of departures from Yemen to Djibouti and Somalia to nearly 2,500 since 27 March.

Djibouti

UNHCR is the lead agency for the emergency related to the Yemen crisis. UNHCR is present at the port of Djibouti and supports ONARS, the government refugee entity responsible for immigration. New arrivals are being jointly registered by ONARS and UNHCR in two transit centres in Obock (Al Rahma transit centre and sport centre) before being transferred to Markazi site in Obock. In Obock UNHCR has a team of 11 persons consisting of a team leader, protection staff, registration staff, community services, and supply staff. UNHCR's partners, Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) for health and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) for shelter, are present in Obock. New arrivals undergo medical check-ups and receive vaccinations. Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and the Red Crescent are also present. ONARS administers Markazi camp with assistance from UNHCR. Movement of refugees from the transit centre to the newly established camp, Markazi, began on 17 April.

Somalia

The four main entry points to Somalia are the ports of Berbera (Somaliland), Bosasso (Puntland), Mogadishu and Kismayo (South-central). Joint Government/UNHCR/IOM registration is taking place at the points of arrival. Reception centres have been established in Berbera and Bosasso, while discussions are taking place for Mogadishu and Kismayo.

In response to the Yemen situation, the RC/HC/DSRSG established an inter-agency Task Force co-led by UNHCR and IOM, in line with the respective mandates for refugees and migrants. The Task Force is coordinating the humanitarian response to support arrivals from Yemen, and their return and reintegration.



Families in Obock reception centre in Djibouti await their departure to the recently established Markazi camp where UNHCR has an 11 member team working with partners to establish the camp as quickly as possible. UNHCR Djibouti / 17 April.

Ethiopia

Since March there have been 34 Yemenis who registered with UNHCR in Ethiopia.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

UNHCR colleagues in Saudi Arabia have interviewed individuals of various nationalities who have entered the country from Yemen to determine their needs.

Major gaps and constraints in Yemen

- Shortage of fuel remains the main challenge for reaching the people of concern.
- Absence of authorities and presence of armed groups in conflict-affected areas makes the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of concern difficult.
- Limited stocks in local markets in some areas hinder the procurement of aid supplies.
- Fear of movement, particularly aid trucks from one governorate to another as trucks could be at risk on the main roads or subject to airstrikes by coalition forces.

Coordination

Contingency planning is being coordinated between countries in the Horn of Africa and in other neighbouring countries, i.e. in Djibouti and Somalia with three and six month planning figures. In Djibouti, the UNCT was able to meet the various government authorities to review the contingency plans as a result of the Yemen crisis.

UNHCR and IOM are leading the inter-agency “Somalia Task Force on Yemen Situation” at the country level. The Task Force reports to the UN Humanitarian Coordinator with members from UN agencies, international and local NGOs. Regular coordination is taking place with the Task Force established by the Federal Government of Somalia led by Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (MOIFA). The Task Force is coordinating the humanitarian response to support arrivals from Yemen, and their return and reintegration designated areas of return. At field level, sub-Task Forces were also formed and led by government authorities in Somaliland, Puntland and South central regions to ensure effective response and coordination.

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Links:

<http://www.unhcr.org/5527c16a9.html>