



Millions in Yemen on brink of famine, situation ‘close to a breaking point,’ warns UN agency

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is scaling up its emergency operations in war-torn Yemen to provide urgently needed food assistance to some nine million people, the agency said today.

“We are in a race against time to save lives and prevent a full-scale famine unfolding in the country, but we urgently need resources to do this,” said the WFP Representative and Country Director in Yemen, Stephen Anderson.

The new emergency operation will require up to \$1.2 billion over a one-year period and should allow WFP to gradually scale up assistance to feed all severely food insecure people in Yemen every month. The success of this operation hinges on immediate sufficient resources from donors.

“The situation is getting close to a breaking point in Yemen with unprecedented levels of hunger and food insecurity. Millions of people can no longer survive without urgent food assistance,” Mr. Anderson continued.

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UN urges Yemen’s warring parties to keep Hodeidah port safe



The United Nations has called on Yemen’s warring parties to keep Red Sea port of Hodeidah safe, warning that any military campaign in its vicinity, from the ground or air, would have devastating civilian consequences.

“The port is located in a densely populated urban center where thousands of people live,” the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen in a statement on Wednesday said.

“The continued military escalation in Yemen, specifically the militarization of large regions on its Western Coast and the associated increase of

humanitarian access obstacles and population movement restrictions are of grave concern to the humanitarian community,” it said, warning that it would result in more displacement, more institutional collapse, and more suffering.

“Hodeidah Port is the major lifeline for imports into Yemen. The country has historically been 80 to 90 percent dependent on imported food, medicines and fuel, all vital for Yemen’s survival today. Close to 80 percent of imported goods flowed through Hodeidah Port. Following airstrikes in August 2015, it now operates at reduced capacity,” the UN agency said.

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Millions in Yemen on brink of famine.....

With the new plan, WFP aims to provide vital food assistance to nearly seven million people classified as severely food insecure, in addition to nutrition support to prevent or treat malnutrition among 2.2 million children. WFP will also assist breastfeeding and pregnant mothers with specialized nutritious foods.

Until it can secure the funds that it needs, WFP will prioritize 6.7 million people for urgent food assistance. Some 2.5 million of them – particularly those in governorates hardest-hit by food insecurity – will receive a package of assistance aimed at averting famine.

This will include a full food ration, which will cover 100 per cent of the food needs of every member of a family for a month, in addition to nutrition support for malnourished children and women. This is the first time that WFP has been able to provide a full food basket in more than a year.

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UN urges Yemen's warring parties

This is the second warning message by UN humanitarian agencies in a week following reports that the Saudi-backed Yemeni government is preparing to advance into the port.

The Yemeni government has accused Houthi movement of smuggling weapons through the port, an accusation which Houthis denied.

Last week, UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen, **Jamie McGoldrick**, warned against any war escalation in the port and strongly condemned the destruction of five cranes in Hodeidah port that he said has forced dozens of vessels to line up offshore.

McGoldrick's remarks signal a potential military escalation soon between Saudi-led military coalition backing the Yemeni exiled government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and their foe of Iranian-allied Shia

A second priority group of 4.2 million people will receive a reduced food ration, which comprises 60 per cent of the full food basket.

“We have to secure urgent resources to meet the needs of all nine million people who are severely food insecure in Yemen as well as the millions of malnourished children and women,” added Mr. Anderson. “Until we are able to do this, we have to spread out what we have to ensure that we are helping the people who are at the most immediate risk of starvation.”

WFP prioritizes its assistance in consultation with humanitarian partners targeting people in highest priority governorates and districts, which are already showing signs of famine-like conditions – especially in Taiz, Hodeidah, Lahj, Abyan and Sa'ada.

Millions of children in Yemen vaccinated against polio through UN-backed campaign

Despite daunting challenges, United Nations agencies and partners in war-torn Yemen have completed a major nationwide polio inoculation campaign, vaccinating nearly five million children under the age of five against the paralyzing disease. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)-UN World Health Organization (WHO)-World Bank supported campaign was launched in February and saw thousands of health workers, health educators, religious leaders and local council officials mobilize their communities to maximize the campaign's reach, including in high-risk groups, such as internally displaced persons and refugees.

“Every minute, the situation of Yemen's children gets worse. It is unacceptable that children in the country are dying of preventable diseases,” said the UNICEF Representative in Yemen, Meritxell Relaño, in a news release today.

“This is why, together with partners, we are sparing no effort to save more lives.”

Through the campaign, more than 369,000 children between the ages of six months and 15 years in the violence struck Sa'ada governorate were also inoculated against measles – a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease.

“WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, are working closely with health authorities to keep Yemen polio-free and curb the spread of measles,” noted Nevio Zagaria, the WHO Representative in Yemen.

Prior to 2006, measles was one of the leading causes of death in children under five in the country. But several

vaccination campaigns have succeeded in drastically reducing child deaths from the disease.

“This partnership provides continuous support to national health authorities to increase vaccination coverage for vulnerable children across Yemen,” Dr. Zagaria added.

Vaccinating children is one of the safest and most cost effective health interventions to protect them from potentially fatal and debilitating diseases. Immunization campaigns are important, not only, to keep communities polio-free but also help minimize the risk of poliovirus coming into them.

“The World Bank is committed to investing in children's health, which is a vital investment in the country's future, through working with our UN partners in Yemen and strengthening the local health institutions” said Sandra Bloemenkamp, World Bank Country Manager for Yemen.





UNHCR says threat risk from starvation in Horn of Africa, Yemen, Nigeria growing displacement

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is warning today that the risk of mass deaths from starvation among populations in the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Nigeria is growing, **Relief Web** reported Tuesday..

This warning is in light of droughts that are also affecting many neighbouring countries and a funding shortfall that has become so severe that an avoidable humanitarian crisis in the region, possibly worse than that of 2011, is fast becoming an inevitability.

Already displacement is rising, forcing us to upgrade our displacement estimates for 2017. In Sudan, for example, where our initial estimate was for 60,000 arrivals from South Sudan this year, we are in the process of revising the expected total upwards to 180,000. Similarly in Uganda we are revising planning from 300,000 displaced to 400,000.

In all, some 20 million people in these countries are in areas affected by drought, 4.2 million of whom are refugees. Consecutive harvests have failed, conflict in South Sudan coupled with drought is leading to famine and outflows of refugees, insecurity in Somalia is leading to rising internal displacement, and rates of malnutrition are high, especially among children and lactating mothers. In the Dollo Ado area of southeast Ethiopia for example, acute malnutrition rates among newly arriving Somali refugee children aged between 6 months and five years are now running at 50-79 percent.



'Famine-like conditions' in areas of Yemen: WFP

"Famine-like conditions" have been detected in areas of Yemen, although an official declaration of famine has yet to be made, the U.N.'s World Food Programme (WFP) said..

Yemen is reeling from two years of civil war that pits the Iran-allied Houthi rebels against a Western-backed coalition led by Saudi Arabia. At least 10,000 people have been killed in the fighting that has unleashed a humanitarian crisis.

The impoverished country is among four - along with South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria - that face famine, although it has only been declared in some areas of South Sudan.

"There are famine-like conditions in the country (Yemen)," WFP spokeswoman Emilia Casella told Reuters in response to a query.

Such conditions prevail in parts of Taiz, Hodeida, Lajh, Abyan and Sadaa, although access is difficult, she said, speaking from WFP headquarters in Rome.

"Those are priority governorates, districts where there are areas where there are famine-like conditions," she said, adding that families in these areas receive full rations.

Some 6.7 million people in Yemen are classified in phase 4 on an international scale of food security, with phase 5 constituting a famine, she noted. "We really need to act now before it falls into official famine".

The United Nations is hosting a major pledging conference for Yemen in Geneva on Tuesday. The world body has appealed for \$2.1 billion to provide food and other life-saving aid, saying that Yemen's economy and institutions are collapsing.

The U.N. refugee agency warned this month that the risk of mass starvation in the four countries is rising rapidly. In all, about 20 million people are at risk in areas where harvests have failed and acute malnutrition rates are increasing, particularly among children.

For famine to be declared, there are three criteria. More than 20 percent of the population has an "extreme food gap, meaning they can't feed themselves"; 30 percent or more of children under age 5 suffer acute malnutrition; and there is a doubling of the rate of mortality, Casella said. This would mean more than 4 deaths for every 10,000 children every day.





Message by Jamie McGoldrick On the occasion of International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has resulted in a growing contamination of explosive hazards such as landmines, improvised explosive devices, cluster munitions and other remnants of war. It has dramatically spread the overall geographic extent of contamination and the increased the technical complexities of removing it as more modern weapon systems have been employed. The UN, through the UNDP, working with its national partner YEMAC (Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre), has been eradicating explosive remnants of war since the late 1990s. By 2012, Yemen was close to declaring itself free of contamination but the current conflict has put that day way out of sight. All 22 governorates are now contaminated, many with severe levels of threat.

Since February 2016, survey and clearance operations by YEMAC recommenced with UNDP support. The results are impressive: YEMAC has removed over 360,000 explosive remnants each one capable of causing death or

severe injury; has over 700 operators working in the field; directly impacting the life of over 3 million people including IDPs; screened 2,500 injured victims and with UNHCR and UNICEF support reached millions of people through risk education projects. The scale of the figures speak for themselves. UN supported mine action is an enabler for the international community's humanitarian response and saves many Yemeni lives.

Despite the progress, it is imperative that clearance activities are scaled up rapidly, particularly in areas of return to provide a safe environment for IDPs to settle. To do so, there is an urgent need for increased financial support as well as full, sustained and unhindered access for all mine action activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the brave Yemeni de-miners working for their life-saving work and their persistence in the face of danger to make Yemen a safer place for all.





JOINT UNICEF - WFP PRESS RELEASE RACE AGAINST TIME TO SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES IN YEMEN



The continuing violence in Yemen is fuelling one of the worst hunger crises in the world, with nearly 7 million people not knowing where their next meal will come from and in desperate need of food assistance. Nearly 2.2 million children are malnourished, including half a million who are severely malnourished and at imminent risk of death if they do not receive urgent care and specialized treatment.

“Millions of children in Yemen are acutely malnourished and many are dying from diseases that are entirely preventable,” said Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. “Without further action from parties to the conflict and the international community, Yemen is at a serious risk of plunging into famine – with even more children’s lives hanging in the balance. We are in a race against time.”

“When a country reaches a stage of famine, it means many lives have already been lost. We should never reach a point where we see children dying of starvation and bereaved mothers mourning their loss on television screens,” said Muhannad Hadi, WFP Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and East Europe. “If we act now, many lives could be saved in Yemen. We call on the international community to urgently provide us with sufficient funding and to help us avert famine across Yemen.”

Violence and food insecurity are having a devastating toll on families’ incomes forcing them and their children to take extreme measures just to survive, including early marriage and joining the fighting. In the first three months of 2017, three times as many children were recruited and used by parties to the conflict compared with the last three months of 2016.

Violence has made large parts of the country inaccessible to humanitarian workers, cutting off vulnerable children and families from urgently needed aid. Despite these and other challenges, in February:

- UNICEF supported malnutrition screening for 132,000 children and treatment for

severe acute malnutrition for over 5,000 children under the age of five,

- Vitamin A supplementation was given to nearly 5 million children under five as part of a UNICEF-supported polio vaccination campaign,
- WFP provided food assistance to a record number of 5.3 million people in 17 governorates.

Earlier this month, WFP announced that it is scaling up its emergency food operations in Yemen to support up to 9 million people who urgently need food assistance. WFP also aims to expand its nutritional support to prevent or treat acute malnutrition for 2.9 million children under five, and pregnant and nursing mothers, including from those families that are already assisted with food or commodity vouchers.

The needs of people in Yemen have rapidly outpaced available resources. WFP urgently requires US\$1.2 billion to meet the basic requirements of 9 million food insecure people in Yemen over the coming 12 months. UNICEF has appealed for US\$236 million to provide life-saving assistance to children affected by the conflict in Yemen in 2017. The efforts of both agencies are less than 20 per cent funded.

On behalf of children and vulnerable families, UNICEF and WFP are calling for an immediate political solution to end the war in Yemen. This would provide safety for millions of desperate families in Yemen and allow for a massive scale-up of food assistance, nutrition support and other humanitarian aid. Until that happens and as the conflict intensifies, the two agencies appeal to all parties to the conflict and those who have influence on them to allow unhindered humanitarian access to people in need and refrain from any action that could prevent the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian supplies.



Yemen: FAO Director-General calls for urgent action to avoid famine

A combination of food assistance and food production assistance is the only way to avoid famine in conflict-ridden Yemen where two-thirds of the population - 17 million people - are suffering from severe food insecurity, **FAO** Director-General José Graziano said today.

"As the conflict continues, food security and nutrition will also continue to deteriorate," Graziano da Silva stressed in his address to a United Nations High-Level Pledging conference for Yemen organized in Geneva and co-hosted by the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden.

"To put these figures (the 17 million) into perspective, we are talking about the double of Switzerland's population being unable to meet their basic daily food needs," the FAO Director-General said.

He stressed how livelihoods support, especially for agriculture and fishing, must be an integral



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

part of the international community's response to the crisis in Yemen.

In 2016, agriculture production in Yemen and the area under cultivation shrank by 38 percent due to the lack of inputs and investments. Livestock production fell by 35 percent.

"Agricultural assistance in a humanitarian crisis can no longer be an afterthought," the FAO Director-General said. "We need to seize every opportunity to support communities in Yemen to continue producing food, even under difficult circumstances."

World Bank commits \$816 mln to support Yemen

The World Bank has committed US\$816 million to support emergency projects in Yemen, Yemen's official **news agency SABA** reported on Tuesday.

Of the total amount, \$500 million will be to create a mechanism for funding and supporting food imports, \$200 million will be dispersed as cash assistance to the poorest families, \$80 million to support healthcare and nutrition, \$36 million to enhance agriculture through the Global Food Security Programme, he agency said.

The announcement was made during a meeting between Hafez Ghanem, Vice President of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa, Jihad Azour, Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund, Dr. Mohammad Al Saadi, Yemeni Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, and Monasser Al Quaiti, Governor of Yemen's Central Bank.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the spring meeting of the World Bank Group and the IMF in the U.S. capital.

Preparations for a donors conference for Yemen - to be held on 10th May in Saudi



Arabia to mobilise support for reconstruction and economic recovery in Yemen- were discussed at a multilateral meeting.

The meeting brought together representatives of donor countries, including members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), the United States, EU members, United Nations agencies and international and regional financial institutions.

As of March 2017, an estimated 17 million Yemenis (about 60 percent of the total population) are estimated food insecure and a further 7 million severely food insecure, according to the World Bank's latest update on the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Basic services across the country are on the verge of collapse while chronic drug shortages and conflict-related destruction restrict around 14 million Yemenis, including 8.3 million children, from accessing health care services.

In addition, more than 1.8 million additional children have been out of school since the escalation of conflict, bringing the total number of children out of school to more than 3 million.



Secretary-General's opening remarks to Yemen Pledging Conference

It is my pleasure to co-chair this conference and to welcome you all today to Geneva. And if you allow me, I will begin with my own brief opening statements.

I thank my co-chairs for hosting this pledging conference, and thank all of you for your solidarity with Yemen's children, women and men.

Yemen today is experiencing a tragedy of immense proportions. Two years of conflict have devastated the lives of ordinary Yemenis. I myself as High Commissioner for Refugees have worked with Yemen for many years, and I was always extremely impressed by the generosity of the Yemeni people. At the time Yemen, already with enormous difficulties, was granting prima facie refugee status to all Somalia refugees coming to Yemen. In a world where so many borders are closed, to see the generosity of Yemeni people was something that I always felt very strongly as a remarkable demonstration of solidarity. And it is the reason why I feel personally very moved when I see these generous people suffering so much and I feel so compelled to ask all of you for your solidarity and your generosity to such a wonderful people. The need for humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians has never been greater. Our humanitarian appeal for 2017 is \$2.1 billion and only 15 per cent has been met until the present moment.

Nearly two-thirds of the population – or almost 19 million people – need emergency support. Some 17 million are food-insecure, making this the world's largest hunger crisis. And seven out of 22 governorates are facing a severe food security emergency.

As always, children are at the highest risk of death.

On average, a child under the age of five dies of preventable causes in Yemen every ten minutes. And this means fifty children in Yemen will die

during today's conference – and all those deaths could have been prevented. Many of the children who survive will be affected by stunting and poor health for their entire lives.

We are witnessing the starving and the crippling of an entire generation. We must act now, to save lives.

Yemen was pitifully poor even before the current conflict. The war has affected every aspect of life, bringing people to breaking point. Their savings have run out; they have no assets to sell; they have exhausted their coping mechanisms.

Import restrictions and the destruction of port facilities have badly affected supplies of basic goods. Ongoing fighting could reduce imports of essential food, fuel and medicines even further. War has devastated the economy, destroyed health services, and forced 3 million people from their homes – leaving many being unable to earn a living or grow crops. Basic services have collapsed, placing millions at risk of disease and other threats.

Nearly 300 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed by shooting, shelling or air strikes.

Maternal mortality is the highest in the region, and more than a million pregnant women are malnourished.

An estimated two million children are out of school, leaving them exposed to recruitment or radicalization by armed groups. Girls as young as 13 are married off as desperate families seek dowry money to meet essential needs. And this man-made crisis has robbed millions of people of their lives, their hope and their dignity. We are here today to turn the tide of suffering, and to create hope.

The international community has the power and the means to end this crisis.

A famine can be prevented if we act quickly and commit to funding crucial life-saving assistance, and if all parties fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law.



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