Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen
Mr. Jamie McGoldrick
On reported attacks on civilians in Sa’ada governorate

I am deeply concerned about reports of airstrikes on civilians in Sa’ada Governorate received from humanitarian partners on the ground. Attacks on a house in As Safa District and on a private vehicle in Razih District have reportedly resulted in the death of at least twelve civilians, including women and children and the injury of ten more people.

While these new incidents are still being investigated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, they are an example of the brutality in which the conflict is being conducted. All parties to the conflict continue to show a disregard for the protection of civilians and the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants in the conduct of hostilities. As I have said before, even wars have rules and such rules must be respected.

I once again urge all parties to the conflict and those who influence and support them to uphold their responsibility under international humanitarian law to ensure the safety of civilians.

Furthermore, the people of Yemen deserve peace and it is imperative that there is a return to the negotiating table to put an end to the suffering of innocent civilians caught up in the conflict.

UN seeks relief for starving Yemen

The UN has urged all the combatants in Yemen to open the country’s land, sea and air ports to civilian and commercial traffic as the spectre of starvation hangs over 25mn people.

Stephen O’Brien, the UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, has called for unconditional humanitarian access to all parts of the country and said the airport in the capital Sanaa should be opened “immediately”.

Yemen is facing the “world’s worst cholera outbreak”, with close to 2,000 people having died from the disease since April, more than half a million people being infected, and another 600,000 expected to contract the infection this year.

“Today, millions of people in Yemen are facing a triple tragedy: the spectre of famine, the world’s largest ever single-year cholera outbreak, and the daily deprivation and injustice of a brutal conflict that the world is allowing to drag on and on,” O’Brien said.

“This human tragedy is deliberate and wanton — it is political and, with will and with courage which are both in short supply, it is stoppable.

“I renew my call…to address the following points: ensure that all ports — land, sea and air — are open to civilian — including commercial — traffic.”
A seminar entitled "Partners for a Sustainable Peace in Yemen" was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was chaired by Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Ambassador Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Moalimi,

Participants included Advisor at the Royal Court and Supervisor General of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Rabiah, Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the Republic of Yemen Ambassador Mohammed bin Saeed Al Jaber, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yemen Dr. Abdulmalek Al-Makhlafi, Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations Ambassador Khalid Yamani, Yemeni Minister of Local Administration Abdulraqueeb Fath, Yemeni ambassador to the United States of America Ahmed bin Mubarak, special envoy of the UN Secretary General to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and former US ambassador to Yemen Gerald Firestein.

The Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Yemen addressed the relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the sisterly Republic of Yemen in the first session of the seminar, stressing that the Kingdom is the largest economic supporter of Yemen during the past 30 years. He stressed the importance of achieving a political solution in Yemen which started with great efforts from the Kingdom since the introduction of the Gulf initiative in 2011.

He pointed out that the current problem in Yemen is the coup of a small Yemeni armed component supported by Iran and allied with a former president.

Al Jaber reiterated the Kingdom's support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, stressing the continued support of the Kingdom for the efforts of the United Nations to achieve peace in Yemen.

The Saudi ambassador to Yemen stressed that the political solution in Yemen, based on the three references, the Gulf initiative, the outcomes of the national dialogue and UN Security Council Resolution 2216, will restore to the world a part of its security and stability and restore the safety and security of Yemen.

For his part, Supervisor General of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Rabiah reviewed the efforts of the Center, stressing that the Kingdom has been for decades the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to the international community. On Yemen, Dr. Al-Rabiah pointed to the Kingdom's continuous efforts in relief of the Yemeni people, including the $ 66.7 million support by Vice Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz for countering the spread of cholera.

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Fighting famine: 'Unprecedented crisis' putting 20 million people at risk, warns UN agency

Twenty million people risk dying of hunger in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and the northeast of Nigeria, including 1.4 million children suffering from severe malnutrition, the United Nations food relief agency said, spotlighting today its worldwide campaign to fight famine.

“Famine is declared when there is evidence of extreme conditions regarding food access, child malnutrition and an increase in the death rate,” stated the UN World Food Programme (WFP), while launching in Spain a global Fighting Famine campaign in Spain to warn about this unprecedented food crisis.

Commending “the intense response mounted by the humanitarian community,” WFP said the famine declared in two counties of South Sudan in February had been overcome and, to date, Somalia, Yemen and northeast Nigeria have averted it.

“Nonetheless,” the agency cautioned, “the situation is still critical.”

WFP pointed out that apart from Yemen, the other three countries are entering the lean season – the time of year when the previous season's harvest has run out and food stocks are at their lowest.

Also, the rains are making access by land difficult, and even impossible.

While air transportation may sometimes be possible, it costs up to seven times more.

The severe food crisis in Yemen is caused by the consequences of armed conflict devastating the country, according to the UN agency.

WFP has implemented emergency response mechanisms that include food airdrops in remote areas in South Sudan and trucking in supplies to areas where people have fled from Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Seminar at UN Hd. entitled "Partners......

He also noted the difficulties faced by relief planes and convoys in delivering aid to Yemen, stressing the importance of the international community's support for the legitimate government of Yemen.

Other speakers reviewed the history of the Yemeni crisis, the importance of the international community's cooperation to achieve a political solution to the war and the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

The Advisor at the Royal Court and General Supervisor of King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Aid Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Rabiah said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has offered, through its charitable arm Riyadh-based King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Aid the hand of charity and aid to the afflicted in the world regardless of any consideration of religion, race or color, it was reported today.

This came in a seminar entitled "Partners for a Sustainable Peace in Yemen" that was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York yesterday with participation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Moalimi.

Al-Rabiah explained that, the Kingdom's official development assistance worth 1.9% out of its GDP for 2014 while the United Nations only requested 0.70% according to the statistics of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Moreover, the Kingdom hosted Yemenis and Syrians with all respect due to the crises in their countries, Al-Rabiah added.

He pointed out that the Kingdom's total projects across the world amounted to 231 projects in 38 countries with a total amount of 761,931,379 US dollars, adding that these countries included Yemen, Syria, Myanmar, Somalia, Burika Faso, Kazakhstan, Mauritania, Tajikistan, Iraq, Palestine, Ethiopia and many other countries.

Participants in the seminar included Saudi Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen, Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Jaber; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yemen Dr. Abdalmalek Al-Makhlafi; Yemeni Minister of Local Administration and Chairman of High Relief Committee in Yemen,
Yemen Stabilisation Programme launches its first phase of the Project “Restoration of livelihoods of affected populations” funded by Government of Japan

While interviewing beneficiaries in Crater to receive vocational training skill, business training and the chance to open a micro business of their own

Aden is a test case for the concretization of post-conflict peace dividend and for the start of a post-conflict recovery phase. Yet the city’s socioeconomic, political and security conditions remain fragile and the State is struggling to improve security orders. Aden and other non-active conflict areas require additional support to help prevent negative setbacks that would adversely delay peace process and reconstruction, as well as put citizens at risk of relapse in secondary conflicts. Livelihoods and essential basic social services have not been recovered to the pre-conflict levels, fuelling a terrain for extreme poverty, violence, further displacement and instability in general. The Yemen Stabilisation Programme (YSP) focuses on two-interrelated objectives: 1) Generate knowledge on local stabilisation needs; and 2) Restore the disrupted livelihoods of the affected population that would yield to the strengthening of community-based protection mechanisms mainly focusing on women and youth. Moreover, the programme is expected to expand to other areas, which would entirely depend on mobilization of resources.

Livelihoods have been severely disrupted as consequences of the ongoing crisis, compounded by lengthy periods of displacement. The YSP will promote the reviving of livelihoods, with a focus on vulnerable groups, to link participants with skills development (technical, life and business skills) and access to finance (grants or start-up kits) to support the establishment of micro-enterprises in socially significant sectors such as agro-processing, bakeries, private educators, health providers, and recycling etc.

Women participation will be promoted through discrete strategies in the design and implementation stages of the livelihoods interventions, as conflict has granted new economic opportunities for Yemeni women to access, often becoming the breadwinners of their families. This will be inspired from the lessons learnt of the Japan-funded Women Economic Empowerment project (2015-2016) which has demonstrated the positive impact of engaging vulnerable women to achieve their economic aspirations for self-reliance.

“Such activities will reinforce peace and stabilization not only for Aden but for the neighbouring governorates since Aden considers a pull factor for other fragile states to settle down. Stabilising Aden will stop the influx of IDP from other states and will present a pilot for replication in other governorates”, Walid Baharoon emphasized, Deputy of UNDP Aden Sub-office

“On behalf of the people of Crater district I would like to Thank UNDP and its partners on providing this opportunity to youth in the area, I believe such activities support stabilising the district as youth are well used in productive fields and will support build capacities and provide employment opportunities to many residents who are suffering until now from the conflict of 2015”, Khaled Sido appreciated, Crater District director

The interviews will aim to select 100 beneficiaries from Crater District in Aden governorate out of more than 1,000 youth that have already been registered to be part of the interviews seeking for the opportunity of acquiring Vocational Training skill, business training and the chance to open a micro business of their own in their districts.
The Yemeni people continue to be hit by an unprecedented and mostly man-made humanitarian crisis. Amid the suffering, ordinary Yemenis are leading a heroic daily fight against acute watery diarrhea and cholera which is now paying off. Thanks to an unparalleled response effort from local workers with the support of international NGOs and UN organisations, the weekly number of reported new cases has declined by one third since late June.

Health, water and sanitation personnel – who have not received salaries in over ten months – have been working tirelessly to stem the outbreak, which remains the worst in the world with over 550,000 suspected cases and more than 2,000 associated deaths recorded since April. More than half of the suspected cases are children.

Massive collective efforts to treat the sick and improve water and sanitation systems have helped slow the spread of the disease.

“We had difficulties managing the number of patients that came to us – many of them with severe conditions,” said Dr. Nahla Arishi, Deputy Manager and Head of the cholera treatment center at Alsadaqah Hospital in Aden City. “The hospital is crowded and beds and essential medicines are in short supply. But I can’t close the hospital’s doors and not accept children because there aren’t enough beds – I am a doctor and a mother too.”

A nationwide cholera awareness campaign is currently underway, mobilizing over 40,000 volunteers going house-to-house and reaching over 2.7 million families so far - approximately 80 per cent of households in Yemen. Through the campaign:

- Nearly 12.5 million people across the country have received information on water disinfection, handwashing, sanitation and food safety, and
- 250,000 children and adults suffering from diarrhoea have been provided with oral rehydration salts and referred for treatment.

“Many of the children I have visited in their homes are thin and weak,” said Muthab Alburaiq Salem, a community health volunteer working on the campaign. “It’s crucial to spread awareness among vulnerable communities so they are spared additional suffering. I fear that my own children will be exposed to diseases – so I treat all children I’m working with in Yemen as if they were my own,” adds Muthab, a mother of two.

Despite these recent gains, the fight against cholera is far from over. Amid continued violence, water and sanitation systems are collapsing, and more than half of Yemen’s health facilities are out of service, cutting off almost 15 million people from safe water and access to basic healthcare. The country remains on the brink of famine, with an estimated 385,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, putting them at heightened risk of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera.

To maintain the gains made, the international community must step up its support for rebuilding health, water and sanitation facilities and invest in preventing future outbreaks.

But without an end to the fighting, more children will die. UNICEF calls on all parties to the conflict to find a peaceful political solution to the violence in Yemen to save children’s lives and offer them the prospect of a brighter future.
More survivors, remains of deceased African migrants found on Yemen beach, says UN agency

Over the past three days, the UN migration agency has found more survivors and victims' remains from last week's tragedy – when hundreds of migrants were forced from two boats into the sea off the coast of Yemen.

280 migrants heading toward Gulf countries were removed from two boats off the coast of Yemen's Shabwa Governorate. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) found, from the first incident on 9 August, the remains of 29 people – 12 Ethiopian men, 12 Ethiopian women and five Somali men.

“The number of people still missing has reduced from 22 to six, all of whom are Ethiopian males,” IOM said in a press statement.

Through contact or from other survivors' reports, IOM was able to account for a majority of the missing.

“This makes 35 people presumed dead from the first incident,” the statement added.

IOM provided urgent medical care, as well as food and water, to 27 survivors – 22 Ethiopian and five Somali men. While 85 people survived this incident, many others left the beach before IOM arrived to assist.

On Thursday, 10 August, another 160 people were forced from a second boat, again off the coast of Yemen, but in a different location from the first tragedy and closer to the shore.

That same day IOM found six bodies on the beach.

“IOM assisted 57 survivors on 10 August. Thirteen of the survivors, whom IOM had helped, returned to the beach the following day realizing that they were too weak to make the trek through the desert to Yemen's land borders,” the statement continued.

On 11 August, IOM and local people found another four and on 12 August, another two. The current total number of confirmed dead from the second incident is 12 – eight Ethiopian males and four Ethiopian females.

“In the immediate aftermath of the smugglers' actions during the second incident, 13 people were missing. Only six people remain missing and so, 18 are now presumed dead,” continued the statement.

On 13 August, IOM located five more survivors and assisted them with medical support, food and water. In total, IOM aided 65 people who survived the second incident – 62 Ethiopian males and three Ethiopian females. Some 142 people survived the second incident and, as on the previous day, people left the beach before IOM arrived.

Of the 280 people forced into Yemen's rough seas on both mornings, 226 survived, 41 were confirmed dead and 12 remain missing, according to IOM.

The total number of presumed dead is currently 53.

Due to the security situation in the country, the migration routes through Yemen are constantly changing.

The surviving Ethiopian and Somali migrants left IOM's care and are most likely making their way to Yemen's borders with the Gulf countries – a journey which takes a week or more depending on the route.

“IOM will continue to patrol Yemen's beaches to provide assistance to migrants in distress and to search for the migrants still missing,” concluded the statement of the UN migration agency.
Pregnant, breastfeeding women among most at risk in Yemen's cholera outbreak

In the midst of the cholera outbreak in Yemen, where an average 5,000 people fall sick every day, the United Nations population agency is warning about the dangers to pregnant and breastfeeding women.

“Pregnant and breastfeeding women, especially those who are malnourished, are particularly vulnerable. An estimated 1.1 million malnourished pregnant women are at risk, requiring immediate care,” the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) recently said.

One of these women is Ibtisam, who contracted cholera when she was nine months pregnant. “I went to a health facility in my hometown in Rayma Governorate, but they did not know what was wrong with me,” she told UNFPA. “I felt I was going to die and lose my baby. I was going to have my first child, and I was desperate not to lose my child.”

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are especially vulnerable to malnutrition, and those weakened by the nutrition crisis are more prone to infections, including cholera.

Ibtisam and her husband then travelled five hours to the nearest hospital in the capital, Sana’a, where she was diagnosed and treated for cholera. “Ibtisam was in her last month of pregnancy. If she [arrived] a day or two later, we are not sure we could have saved her or her baby,” Dr. Farea, who helped treat her, told the UN agency.

UNFPA has said that the cholera crisis in Yemen is the worst in the world, and its magnitude is linked to the ongoing conflict and displacement crisis, the breakdown of health and sanitation systems, and serious food insecurity.

Women as agents of change

While among the most vulnerable, women can also play a key role in controlling the spread of cholera because they are traditionally tasked with preparing food. Cholera often spreads through contaminated food or water.

“If women are made aware about the steps they can take to prevent cholera and detect its symptoms at an early stage, we can save a lot of lives,” Dr. Farea said.

Aman’a, a 35-year-old mother of five, told UNFPA that was aware of the need for good hygiene, but hardship conditions have made disease prevention difficult.

“At home, I take all the precautions when preparing food, and make sure my children follow the same. Yet I was infected after visiting one of my relatives,” she said. “I try to tell my friends and family to maintain good hygiene and wash fruits and vegetables with clean water several times before cooking.”

The UN agency said it has stepped up efforts to assist women and girls in Yemen, distributing dignity kits – which contain soap, sanitary napkins and basic clothes – and supporting midwives, mobile clinics and community outreach.
The secretary-general  
'Civilians are Not a Target,' says UN chief on World Humanitarian Day

“On World Humanitarian Day, we come together to reaffirm that civilians caught in conflict and those who care for them are #NotATarget. We appeal to world leaders to take action to protect them and to deliver on the promise of our mutual, shared humanity. For its part, the UN gender empowerment entity offered full support to the UN's #NotATarget campaign, pointing out that violations of international humanitarian law have generated a global protection crisis.

“Every day, young girls are increasingly exposed to early and forced marriage and young boys are forcibly recruited into armed groups,” said UN Women in a statement marking the Day.

“Sexual and gender-based violence continue to shatter lives and undermine community cohesion,” it added.

According to UN Women, some 60 per cent of preventable maternal deaths take place in conflict, displacement or natural disaster settings; girls are two and a half times more likely to be out of school in conflict countries; and a reported one in five refugee or displaced women experience sexual violence, with the actual numbers potentially much higher.

“Women are the leaders in their families, communities and societies who drive effective responses to crisis. And it is women and girls who have insights into what is needed and what works, which must inform effective humanitarian response,” said UN Women.

“On World Humanitarian Day, we must come together to change the status quo – for women and girls, and for all civilians caught up in crises,” concluded the statement.

During a special event yesterday at UN Headquarters in New York, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien spoke of the challenges faced by aid workers around the world.

“Last year, 288 aid workers were targeted in 158 attacks. In the past three months alone, relief workers have been shelled and shot at, kidnapped and killed in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria,” he said. “This is blatantly unacceptable.”