



Trucks with humanitarian assistance cross a checkpoint into Taizz City. Photo: UNHCR / Mohammed Al Hasani.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2016 YHRP is requesting US\$1.8 billion to assist 13.6 million people.
- Humanitarian access is most difficult in Taizz, Sa'ada, Hajjah and Al Baydah governorates.
- Over 100,000 households are currently benefitting from cash programmes.

FIGURES

Total Population	26 m
# of people who need assistance	21.2 m
# of food insecure people	14.4 m
# of people displaced	2.5 m
# of children at risk of malnutrition	1.8 m
# of deaths (WHO)	>6,202
# of injuries (WHO)	>29,612

Source: HRP and HNO

FUNDING 2016 (US\$)

1.8 billion
Requested

41.7 million (2%)
Funding against the HR

61.5 million
Funding outside the HR

103 million
Total humanitarian funding received for Yemen

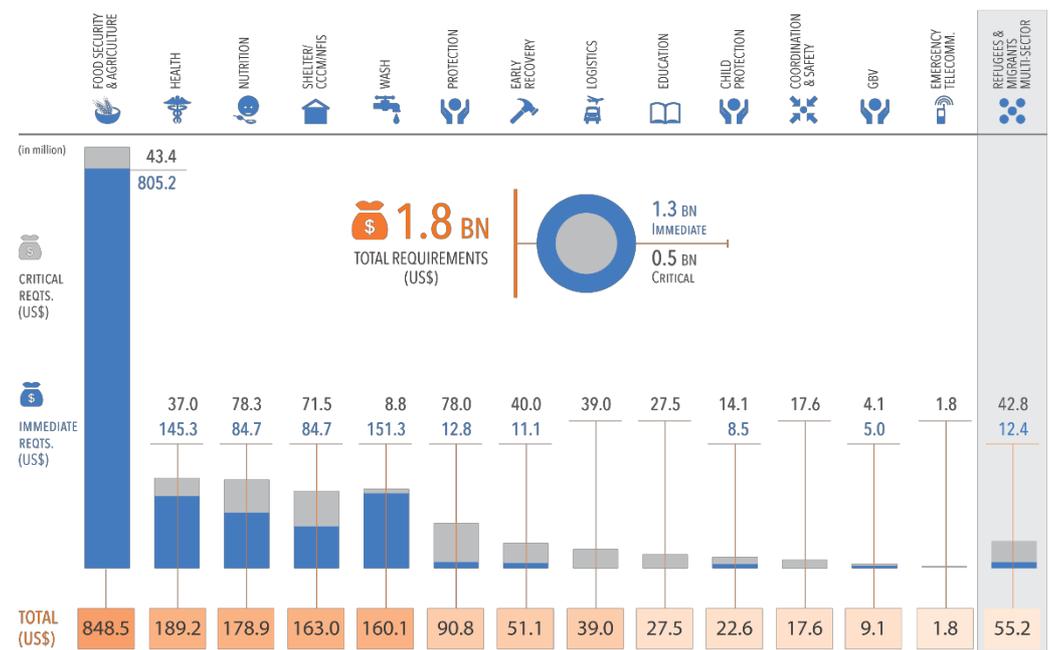
Source: FTS, 1 March 2016

2016 Response Targets Most Vulnerable

13.6 million people in Yemen to receive humanitarian assistance.

The 2016 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) was launched by the Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, in Geneva on 18 February. "Civilians in Yemen are the losers," McGoldrick explained at the launch. "Yemen's plight has often been overshadowed by crises elsewhere in the region and the world. We cannot afford to let Yemen become a forgotten crisis," he added.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS BY CLUSTERS



Source: Clusters, January 2016

The response plan brings together over 100 humanitarian partners working in Yemen and seeks \$1.8 billion to provide critical and life-saving assistance to 13.6 million people across the country. Most immediate assistance is needed in the sectors of food security, health and water, sanitation and hygiene. The plan aims to save lives, prioritizing the most vulnerable, protect civilians from harm, promote equitable access for girls and women, support people's resilience and restore their livelihoods. The governorates facing the highest levels of need include Taizz, Sa'ada, Hajjah and Aden.

One of the priorities in the YHRP is to provide immediate, direct life-saving or protection assistance to the most vulnerable people in Yemen.

11.5 million out of the 13.6 million people that the HRP aims to assist live in the governorates that are facing the most severe needs in Yemen.

Humanitarian actors, particularly national NGOs, can operate in 75 per cent of Yemen.

Humanitarian response plan builds on previous achievements

Yemen already faced huge humanitarian needs with 15.9 million people (61 per cent of the population) requiring humanitarian assistance at the end of 2014. Since March 2015, the escalation of conflict and an increase in attacks on civilian and economic infrastructure have pushed basic social services to near collapse and the economy has ground to a virtual halt. As a result, humanitarian needs have grown significantly.

The 2016 YHRP seeks to further scale up the response, building on previous achievements recorded by humanitarian partners.



Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, launching the YHRP in Geneva on 18 February. Left is Rudi Muller, Director OCHA Geneva. Photo: OCHA/ Madeleine Hamel

In 2015, despite a difficult operating environment and receiving only 56 per cent of funding requested, humanitarian partners reached at least 8.8 million girls, boys, women and men across Yemen with some form of humanitarian assistance. In December alone, at least 1.5 million people received assistance in all the 21 conflict-affected governorates. Since June, operational capacity has nearly doubled, with 103 organisations now participating in the coordinated response. More than half of these organisations are national NGOs, who are playing a key role in boosting delivery.

“Without sustained access, however, none of this is possible,” said McGoldrick. “We look to parties participating in this conflict to facilitate humanitarian assistance in any location where people need aid and protection. This means that all the warring parties - in all locations at all times - must allow neutral and impartial aid organizations to safely deliver life-saving aid and allow civilians to reach that aid. This obligation is non-negotiable and must be unconditional.”

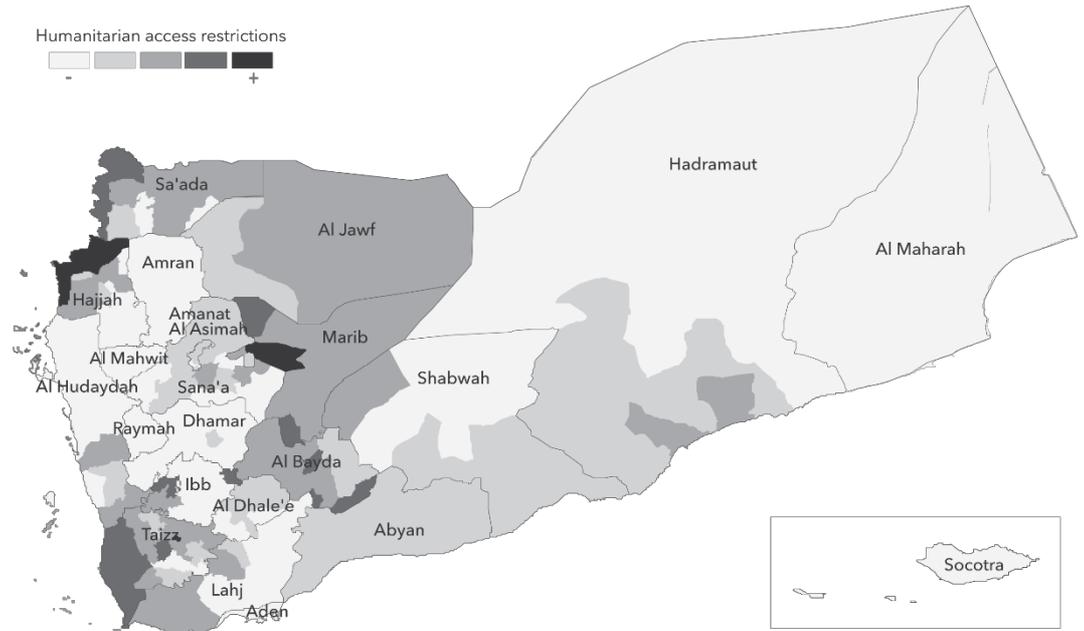
Humanitarian aid reaching most districts but many vulnerable areas remain hard to access

Aid workers deliver assistance even in high-risk areas

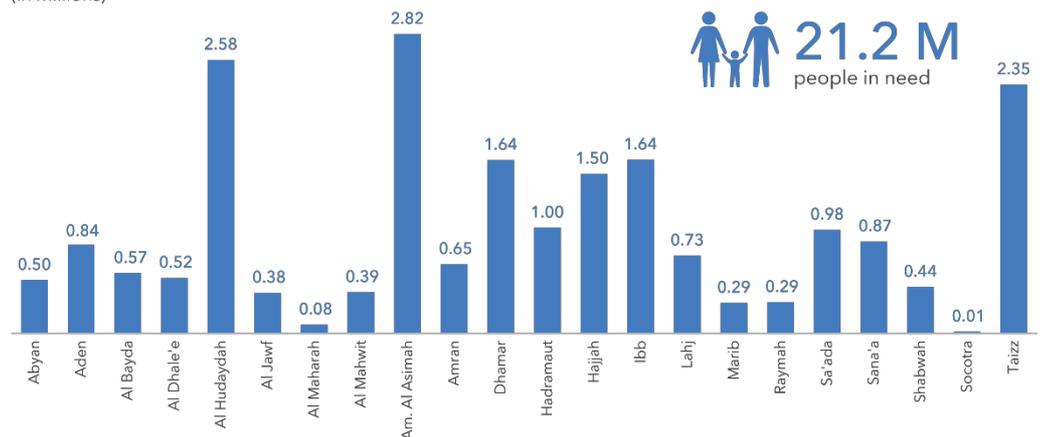
Despite considerable insecurity across Yemen, humanitarian partners estimate that 75 per cent of districts in the country face relatively low access constraints and 7 per cent of districts are categorized as facing the highest levels of constraints. However, even in areas with high levels of conflict-related insecurity, like parts of Sa’ada or Aden, humanitarian workers, mainly those working for national NGOs, continue to deliver assistance to people in need, albeit at high risk.

Access remains difficult because of deliberate restrictions put in place by the parties (as is the case in Taizz City since August 2015) and because of insecurity. Humanitarian partners face extreme challenges accessing the border areas of Sa’ada and Hajjah due to ongoing air strikes and artillery barrages. Serious constraints also persist in front-line areas in Marib and Al Bayda governorates. With a large portion of assistance being delivered by national partners it is critical that these organisations have the operational capacity to manage security risks while continuing to deliver to those most in need.

Access constraints and people in need in Yemen by governorate as of February 2016.



PEOPLE IN NEED BY GOVERNORATE
(in millions)



Source: OCHA

Bureaucracy and checkpoints impede rapid response

The effective delivery of humanitarian assistance depends to a large extent on sustained access to people in need.

Bureaucratic requirements imposed by the authorities continue to delay and impede the rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance. In one week alone in February, the Ministry of Interior in Yemen refused travel permission to three separate UN-led missions from Sana'a to Ibb and Taizz. Due to persistent challenges obtaining visas for international security staff, the UN and its partners also struggle to maintain the level of security presence required in order to continue to expand humanitarian response.

The proliferation of checkpoints across the country is another impediment to timely humanitarian action. They slow the transport of key goods and services and in some instances halt movement altogether. Command and control lines within some armed groups can be tenuous, with agreements and guarantees reached at the national level not necessarily communicated downstream to the individuals at checkpoints. Thus, despite having permission to cross, trucks are often held up and sometimes delayed for days, weeks or months.

UN agencies continue to notify the coalition of staff and supply movements in conflict areas through a deconfliction mechanism in Riyadh. This deconfliction process is a necessary procedure for ensuring security, but none the less requires considerable dedicated capacity on the part of agencies given the high volume of land movements

being undertaken. As the humanitarian response on the ground expands, efforts continue to strengthen and streamline this notification process so that aid is delivered on time and safely.

Expanded footprint improves access negotiations

In order to expand the presence of international and national staff across Yemen, the UN has opened operational hubs in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Ibb, and Sa'ada. These hubs bring staff and resources closer to affected people, allowing for a better understanding of the type of assistance they need and facilitating the rapid delivery of that assistance. This permanent field presence is improving access negotiations with local authorities, armed groups and other stakeholders. This is key to ensuring local acceptance and securing guarantees for the safety and security of humanitarian staff and people receiving humanitarian assistance during distributions.

However, international organisations based in the operational hubs are experiencing increasing bureaucratic demands. These requests – often arising at short notice - include demands for daily travel plans and the imposition of conditions on agencies wishing to conduct assessments and monitoring work. Severe security constraints in Aden have also prevented an international presence there since October 2015. The combined effects of these challenges limit the humanitarian operating space.



Humanitarian staff in the staging area of a convoy waiting for clearance.
Photo: OCHA / Philippe Kropf

The proliferation of checkpoints across the country makes it difficult for humanitarian assistance to reach people in need.

Cash assistance efforts are being adapted to help Yemeni people meet their needs in the local context.

Cash programming on the rise in Yemen

100,000 households reached with cash assistance in 2015

“Aid organizations reached over 100,000 households in eight governorates with cash assistance in 2015,” explained Hilary Dragicevic from Oxfam, who chairs the Cash and Voucher Working Group in Yemen. The number may seem dwarfed by the millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance; however, cash programming is growing despite facing some difficulties due to the impact of conflict on the functioning of markets and massive fluctuations of food imports and prices over the last eleven months.

Cash programming offers a number of advantages over direct distributions, if based on strong risk and market assessments and an understanding of community preferences. It is often more economical, as food or emergency household items do not have to be bought, stored, or transported. It also supports and stimulates the local economy. In comparison to direct distributions, cash programming enables people to spend money based on their own priorities and preferences, whether to buy food, send children to school, or take a relative to the hospital. In other words, people are given a choice, contributing to a stronger sense of dignity and helping avoid some negative coping

mechanisms that women, men and children often have to adopt when faced with significant hardship.

Tailoring cash assistance to local context and needs

“It was a great feeling to come to a supermarket and choose what products I wanted to put into my cart,” said Afrah Mohammad Osbah, a 31-year old divorced mother of four children. Her home in the old city of Sana’a was destroyed by an airstrike in July, killing her brother who was the breadwinner of the family. Afrah and her children recently received cash vouchers as part of a programme to assist people directly affected by the conflict, financed by the Yemen [Humanitarian Pooled Fund](#). “With the vouchers, I was able to buy food for three months,” she said.

“Cash assistance is not just about handing out money,” said Laurianne Leca from OCHA Yemen’s Humanitarian Financing Unit. “Cash programming has to be adapted to best suit the local context.” The NGO that supported Afrah and her children opted for vouchers over unconditional cash assistance, based



Cash or vouchers give people more choices and dignity. Photo: NFDHR

on the request of affected women. “Many women opted to receive vouchers rather than cash to reduce the risk of men spending the money on unnecessary items,” the programme coordinator explained.

Accessibility is also important. While the supermarket in Sana’a is only a few hundred metres from the displacement site, access to markets and shops may be more difficult in rural areas. In 2016, the humanitarian community in Yemen plans to scale up the use of cash programming to benefit up to one million people.

Overcoming the challenge of reaching women

A call center will help expand women’s engagement in humanitarian action

Women are disproportionately affected by the conflict with many male family members absent or unable to provide for their families. In many locations the proportion of female led families among the displaced is 30-40 per cent, and occasionally as high as 80 per cent. However, women’s ability to access help and influence decisions around humanitarian action is limited by culture and past practice. As an NGO representative has noted, “some local councils refuse to record female-headed households as beneficiaries or do not allow female staff to work in the villages.” This makes their plight invisible and discourages them from seeking assistance. In another example, the Water and Sanitation (WASH) coordinator of an implementing partner noted that “when we arrived for our first hygiene sensitization session, the community leader had not gathered any women because he did not want a man holding a session in front of the women.”

Due to this reality, many organizations tell communities and local councils from the outset that both males and females must be involved, and some NGOs make it clear that

Cash transfers are an effective strategy to assist people in need of humanitarian support and will be expanded in 2016.

Humanitarian partners are working to ensure equitable distribution of assistance to men and women.

assistance will not be provided unless they are able to meet with both men and women, giving a clear message that both are equally important in humanitarian programming.

To further strengthen the participation of women, the humanitarian community in Yemen has launched a complaints and feedback mechanism. The call centre fosters two-way communication with affected people and helps promote equitable access to services and information collection from women. It has seven active lines and offers the choice to talk with a male or female operator. It is managed by the NGO AMIDEAST and funded by UNHCR.

In addition to the “face-to-face” exchange on the ground with NGO workers, the [Tawasul Call Centre](#), named after the Arabic verb “to connect”, allows people to call in from across the country. In January, it received 458 calls from nine governorates with just over one third of the calls coming from women. The feedback provided by the callers is passed on to the relevant humanitarian organizations with the aim of addressing people’s concerns.



A female programme manager of an NGO interacting with locals in Hajjah Governorate. Photo: CARE

For further information, please contact:

Trond Jensen, Head of Office, jensen8@un.org, Tel: +967 7 12222 207

Jessica Jordan, OCHA Amman Hub, jordanj@un.org, Tel: +962 79867 4617

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