

YEMEN FLASH REPORT ON RECENT ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

1 April 2015

Summary of the Situation in Yemen

As the conflict in the country escalates further, the situation of children affected by grave child rights violations has considerably deteriorated with many children either maimed or killed.

The recent bombing and increased street fighting in Yemen have resulted in more children dying in the past few days than in the whole of 2014. At least 62 children have been killed and 30 maimed as a result of the escalation in conflict since 26 March 15. Preliminary estimates from the field indicate that over 1 million children are unable to go to school as their schools are either closed or are in areas close to military targets. These are all preliminary figures and UNICEF is in the process of verifying numbers on a daily basis.

There are reports of breakdown in water supply, disruption of health and education services and of looting and lawlessness. Six schools and two health facilities are reportedly being occupied by armed groups and thousands of families are reportedly being displaced from their homes in search of safer places to stay. Towns are reported emptied of their inhabitants. Roads linking Sana'a with other areas are congested as large numbers of families move to safer areas. There are diesel shortages reported in many governorates as well as power shortages, which are affecting water supplies and risking disruption to the cold chain.

There are increasing reports of civilian areas being hit in several areas across the country, including factories and residential areas. In the north, hundreds of people have been affected by the ongoing airstrikes with various homes being destroyed. There are also reports that anti-aircraft are being installed in civilian areas and on residences.

Hodeidah, Sa'ada, Hajjah/Harad (northern area):

An attack on Al Mazraq internally displaced person (IDP) camp in Harad on 29 March resulted in at least 3 children killed, 12 maimed and 4 others missing. The process of monitoring and reporting the cases is ongoing by partners to confirm the total numbers affected. 941 IDP families were either registered or accounted for by the camp management or UNICEF partners. Around 80 per cent of families deserted the camps directly after the attack, half of which have now started returning gradually.

Vaccination and other health services are able to continue throughout Sana'a, Dhamar, Al Baida, Marib, Amran, Almahra, Hadhramout alwadi and Al Sahel Governorates, with the exception of one hospital in Majzar, which is reportedly occupied by armed groups.

Reportedly, many families in Sa'ada have been advised to move including from Dahyan District where thousands of families are believed to have left towns. In addition, 278 families are reported to have been displaced to Razih District from the neighbouring districts which border Saudi Arabia.

The Yemani food processing factory in Hodeidah, where thousands of people work, was reportedly targeted with casualties reported. Basic food prices have also started to rise, causing increasing panic about food availability in the market.

Aden, Lahj, Al Dhale, Abyan (southern area):

The curfew in Aden continues with lawlessness and street fighting reported.

There is a shortage of fuel in Lahj, Aden, Abyan and Al Dhale as most gas stations are either closed or open for limited hours each day. Water and electricity has been cut off for over a week in Lahj, and for several days in other governorates. Maintaining the cold chain is becoming a major concern.

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Basic services are disrupted in most of the southern governorates. The water situation in Aden is critical as pumps are inactive due to fuel shortages. Waste is accumulating and sewage overflowing in most of the southern governorates as municipal workers cannot work due to the insecurity, raising concerns over disease outbreak. Water trucking in Lahj at the present time is almost impossible due to shortages of fuel, lack of access and insecurity, while water scarcity in Al Dhale was already a chronic problem prior to these clashes.

Two ambulances were taken by armed groups to transfer their casualties but were later released following negotiation with UNICEF.

More than 1,200 families from Lahj and 9,000 people from Dhale have been reported as displaced.

Sana'a, Taiz, Ibb (central and other areas):

Military targets in and around Sana'a City continue to be subject to air strikes, including Sana'a airport. In nearby Marib, there is high anticipation of conflict erupting and ground attacks being launched. A hospital in Sanhan District, Sana'a was reported as attacked on 28th March.

All government and private schools in 10 districts of Sana'a are closed, affecting 576,000 children.

An additional 10 children were reportedly killed and a further 8 maimed in air strikes over the past few days, according to UNICEF partners.

In Taiz, school closures have affected close to 155,000 children, while other students are not going to schools out of fear. Four schools in Taiz and one in Ibb have been reported as occupied by armed groups.

UNICEF's Response

Health and Nutrition

5,000 litres of fuel has been provided to ensure generators are working on daily basis in the central vaccine storage facility at the Ministry of Public Health with no disruption due to electricity cuts. Vaccine stock for the second quarter of the year has already started to reach some governorates but not all. UNICEF is working with MoPHP to accelerate distribution.

One of UNICEF's partners moved from Amran to Harad to support the provision of health services to the affected IDPs from Al Mazraq camp.

Health and nutrition activities are unaffected by the current crisis in Hodeidah. Although supplies of therapeutic food for treating malnutrition are running low in four governorates, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health are coordinating the delivery of additional plumpy nut supplies. Oral Rehydration Salts are no longer available in the health office warehouses but UNICEF health section is working on securing additional supplies.

In Hajjah, there is sufficient quantity of vaccines in all districts and the cold chain is working normally. However, the cold chain warehouse in Hodeidah is being supported by UNICEF through maintenance of the power generator and fuel delivery to ensure that vaccines remain effective.

UNICEF is supporting the costs of providing five ambulances in Aden for one month and has provided eight beds for the main emergency centre run by MSF in Al-Sadaqa Hospital. UNICEF also provided 800 blood packs needed for the central blood bank and other public hospitals covering emergency services in the meantime, as well as support to blood typing and testing for transfusions. 200 kits of consumable materials such as soap have been provided to Al-Gamhouria and 22nd May Hospitals in Aden.

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Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF and GARWP provided a generator to run a water project in a village in Tuban District, Lahj, to serve 500 resident families and 250 displaced families. IDPs who moved from Sa'ada to Mazraq have received clean water and sanitation from the existing water supply system.

Community volunteers in Al Dhale have begun linking community members with the nearby health facilities and giving hygiene awareness information to prevent disease outbreaks due to lack of water.

Child Protection

Teams of trained facilitators have been raising awareness and distributing information on the risks of mines (MRE) in areas affected by air strikes, since 29 March. Radio stations, TV and mosques are also broadcasting UNICEF's MRE and PSS messages.

UNICEF is working with YEMAC to remove remnants of war in Sheik Othman District.

Child Protection partners continue to record and report instances of grave child rights violations through the MRM reporting system. Verifications are made as much as possible on the numbers of children killed, maimed, recruited or used, as well as the number of schools or health facilities attacked, occupied or made unsafe during the conflict. However, the high level of insecurity makes such verifications difficult.

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