

Operational context

Yemen remains one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. After more than six years of a devastating and unrelenting conflict, some 20 million Yemenis (66 per cent of the total population) depend urgently on humanitarian assistance to survive, including four million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 140,146 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Somalia and Ethiopia. The country has the **fourth largest IDP population due to conflict in the world**. Raging clashes continue to deteriorate the protection space for civilians and force thousands of families to seek refuge elsewhere. There are more than 50 active frontlines across the country and more than 50,000 individuals have been forcibly displaced this year, particularly in Marib governorate. Countrywide, the economy has collapsed and the Yemeni Riyal continues to devalue, negatively impacting purchasing power. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the total population live below the poverty line and food security data has further revealed that five million Yemenis were on the brink of famine earlier this year, most of whom are displaced individuals who are four times more at risk of falling into hunger than other Yemenis. The peace process has yet to make any significant progress.

Key figures



20.7 million
Yemenis in need



12.1 million
Yemenis in acute need



4 million internally displaced Yemenis



140,974 refugees and asylum-seekers (mainly Somalis and Ethiopians)



76% of IDPs are women and children



2.6 million IDPs are highly food insecure



1 million IDPs living across 1,700 informal sites



80% of Yemenis live below the poverty line

Main activities

As part of the inter-agency humanitarian response to assist those most in need in Yemen, UNHCR leads the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI also known as core relief items or CRIs) clusters. UNHCR also co-leads with IOM the Refugees and Migrants Multi-Sector response. All interventions conducted by the Operation are guided by the Tri-Cluster and Area-Based approaches, whereby UNHCR aims to promote the complementarity of its interventions for all displaced populations and communities hosting them. A summary of the Country Operational Plan can be found on this [link](#).

Protection

As the Protection Cluster Lead Agency, UNHCR plays a critical role in promoting the protection of civilians with a focus on IDPs and the impact of the conflict on civilians, dedicating efforts to guarantee the access to safe areas and humanitarian assistance. Protection monitoring teams across the country – be they in one of the 13 community centres supported by UNHCR or mobile teams – further help identify those in need of specialised protection services and conduct public and private advocacy with parties to the conflict on an ongoing basis. Maintaining the capacity to conduct protection monitoring is critical to inform analysis, evidence-based advocacy and delivery of assistance. UNHCR has in place dedicated monitoring tools at community and household level feeding into vulnerability criteria used for assistance eligibility and to identify the main areas of needs.

As part of its interventions, UNHCR further provides a wide range of protection services including: legal counselling and representation mainly for obtention of IDs, identification and referral of vulnerable persons to specialized services, psycho-social first aid, assistance for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) or child abuse or exploitation, and awareness-raising and capacity building activities on protection issues. For refugees and asylum-seekers, emphasis is placed on admission to the territory and access to safety, registration and documentation with the relevant authorities, and support to voluntary returns and resettlement opportunities.

Cash-based interventions

One of the main ways UNHCR assists vulnerable displaced Yemeni and refugee families to cover their most basic and pressing needs is through the distribution of cash assistance, including multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), rental subsidies, and emergency and winter cash. These cash streams are all anchored in UNHCR's protection mandate as protection risks are part of the eligibility criteria. UNHCR hosts the largest vulnerability and socio-economic database with 1.4 million IDPs and refugees and 400,000 members of the host community assessed over the last 18 months. As markets are functioning and accessible to Yemenis, unconditional cash provides an efficient way to meet the needs of those affected by displacement, allowing families to prioritize their own needs while upholding their dignity and making them less likely to resort to harmful coping strategies. These interventions further contribute to boost the local economy and markets. In 2020, UNHCR assisted over 1.2 million IDPs and refugees with cash. **In 2021, UNHCR aims to reach some 1.5 million IDPs and 85,000 refugees with cash assistance.** Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) shows that up to 88 per cent of displaced Yemeni families receiving cash spend all or part of it on food – while shelter-related needs remain a key priority for cash beneficiaries. More details on this [link](#). The cash programme in Yemen is amongst the top five cash programmes of UNCHR globally, and the second largest dedicated to IDPs.

Shelter and core relief items

As the Shelter Cluster lead for IDPs in Yemen, UNHCR provides emergency shelter and basic household items such as mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets and solar lamps, especially to newly displaced families. UNHCR produced emergency shelter kits adapted to the local weather and locally procured materials, contributing to the local economy and assisting recently displaced individuals become self-sufficient. UNHCR also upgrades emergency shelters to more durable solutions providing a dignified and sustainable shelter for up to five years. The Operation further supports IDPs at risk of eviction through rental subsidies. **In 2021, UNHCR aims to provide rental subsidies to some 67,000 vulnerable IDP families and distribute 70,000 emergency shelter kits, 20,000 transitional shelters and 98,000 core relief item kits.**



Ahlam is a 28 years-old displaced Yemeni widow living with her four children in an IDP hosting site in Hajjah Governorate where she has received cash and shelter support from UNHCR.

Camp coordination and camp management

More than one million IDPs are estimated to live in more than 1,700 IDP sites across Yemen, only half of those supported by humanitarian actors. As the CCCM Cluster lead, UNHCR works with local authorities and partners to provide coordinated services to displaced Yemenis in IDP hosting sites and surrounding communities. This translates into contributing to **ensure adequate shelter and common infrastructures in IDP hosting sites.** In addition, UNHCR maps needs and gaps in the interventions on such sites and work to mitigate the threat of eviction from sites in the proximity of active areas of conflict (some 45 per cent of sites are within 5 km of such areas). UNHCR further supports analysis and response on housing, land, and property (HLP) issues and is engaged in exploring ways to reinforce support from local authorities to identify public land and upgrade shelter conditions in collective centres and IDP hosting sites.

Area-based approach

UNHCR advocates with the humanitarian community and donors to implement an area-based approach whenever feasible and allow all displaced (IDPs and refugees) and host populations to benefit from humanitarian assistance and development initiatives from all relevant actors based on their actual needs. **Through this approach, UNHCR implements projects benefitting both the displaced population and host communities. These type of initiatives include cash for work modalities and frequently focus on WASH, renewable energy and rehabilitation of common infrastructure.** A wide-range of this type of interventions have been conducted recently in Basateen neighborhood in Aden Governorate, benefitting more than 70,000 refugees, IDPs and members of the host community. Among the projects implemented UNHCR constructed and maintains three primary schools and two clinics, including a health centre receiving 1,500 consultations per week. In addition, other projects include monthly cleaning campaign, upgrading of water resources and rehabilitation of water and sanitation networks, and installation of solar-powered street light poles helping improve safety and security and reduce GBV risks for women and girls.

[Comprehensive refugee response](#)

UNHCR is the only agency addressing the protection and well-being of 140,000+ refugees and asylum-seekers across Yemen, mainly from Somalia and Ethiopia. Yemen is the only country in the Arabian Peninsula that ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol, granting *prima facie* status to Somali nationals since 1991. The majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in Yemen (around 65%) reside in southern governorates. There is only one refugee camp in the country, Kharaz refugee camp, in Lahj Governorate, which currently hosts over 9,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. An “out of camp” strategy is currently being designed to integrate the refugees living in the camp into the surrounding host community and services. In addition to protection services, cash and shelter, UNHCR also provides refugees and asylum-seekers with food, health and education services as well as livelihoods opportunities when agreed upon by the relevant authorities. The registration of asylum-seekers is yet to resume in northern Yemen.

[Inter-agency advocacy](#)

Under its leading role of the Protection, CCCM and Shelter/NFI Clusters, UNHCR regularly advocates for its Tri-Cluster approach through which joint interventions are conducted, including on: joint site identification (demining, site planning), policy on civilian character of sites and non-encampment, HLP issues, eviction guidance including joint displacement tracking, and support on community engagement and protection considerations, among others. UNHCR also plays a key role in the inter-agency coordination in ensuring that displacement issues are well reflected in both humanitarian and development planning documents, including in relation to durable solutions to displacement. UNHCR leads the advocacy on the protection of civilians especially in relation to the impact of the conflict on displaced populations.




Working with partners

UNHCR, as part of the UN Country Team, leads the Protection, CCCM and Shelter/NFI clusters, including sub-clusters and technical working groups. UNHCR also participates in inter-agency working groups, including the Humanitarian Access Working Group, the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Working Group, and other specialized task forces. Vis-à-vis its 20 implementing partners, most of which are national NGOs, UNHCR holds regular meetings to set policy, address challenges and monitor performance. UNHCR also maintains regular contact with the Supreme Council for Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA), the National Committee for Refugee Affairs (NACRA), the Executive Unit (ExUnit), and the Department of Immigration, Naturalization and Passports Authority (IPNA) as the respective authorities' bodies covering key humanitarian matters in their respective area of responsibility. By strengthening its collaboration with UN partners such as UNICEF, UNHCR has also reinforced common strategies on child protection, education, and birth registration in the context of interventions for refugees; UNFPA on GBV protection; WFP on food distribution in Kharaz refugee camp; and IOM as a strategic partner for the Ethiopian and Somali returns programmes and mixed population flows especially on the border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Special thanks to donors

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More information

For more information please visit the [Yemen Global Focus](#) and [Yemen Operational Portal](#) and keep further updated through:  [UNHCR Yemen Twitter](#)  [UNHCR Yemen Facebook](#) and  [UNHCR Instagram](#)

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