

UNDERSTANDING THE YEMEN CRISIS: APRIL 2020 SUMMARY SHEET



This summary sheet is produced by TorqAid – www.torqaid.com for people wanting to better understand the Yemen humanitarian crisis. It is regularly updated and can be accessed from the TorqAid website on <http://www.torqaid.com/understanding-yemen>

Key Websites

The BBC and Aljazeera provide a generalised overview of the overall political situation both across the Middle East in general, with specific reports on the Yemen. ACAPS focuses in on an in-depth study of Yemen, and particularly the humanitarian situation. FEWS-NET focuses in on the food security situation throughout the country. Both Relief Web and the Humanitarian Response provide comprehensive summaries of what the key UN agencies and international NGOs are doing, in support of national bodies, to try and provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population.

- BBC - https://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle_east
- Aljazeera - <https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/regions/middleeast.html>
- ACAPS - <https://www.acaps.org/country/yemen/crisis/complex-crisis>
- FEWS-NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network) - <http://www.fews.net/east-africa/yemen>
- ReliefWeb - www.reliefweb.int/country/yem
- Humanitarian Response - www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/yemen

Key Facts and Figures for Yemen¹

- Population 30.5 million
- 24.1 million people in need, including 14.3 million in acute need
- 3.5 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

Overall Humanitarian Situation in Yemen

Background context²

Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, with approximately 70% of people living in rural areas. The capital is Sana'a in the north-west of the country, whilst the two main ports are Hodaydah (for areas mainly occupied by the Houthi), and Aden (for Government of Yemen = GoY held areas). Tribal law in this largely Moslem³ country remains strong in the absence of a strong centralised legal system. The two separate countries of North and South Yemen were united as the Republic of Yemen in 1990. President Saleh ruled from this date until 2012, when he was replaced by his deputy Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, who became President himself. Increased opposition to President Hadi, this including from the minority Shi'ite Houthis, led to the instalment of a Houthi government in early 2015. President Hadi fled south to Aden, and since March 2015 there has been conflict between his Government of Yemen (GoY) forces and those Houthi based in Sana'a. A coalition of nine Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, has supported the GoY since 2015. Other

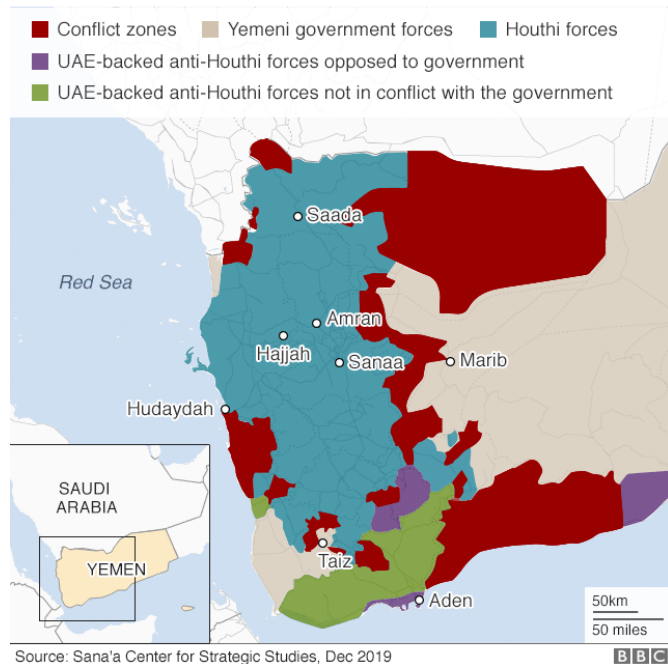
¹ See the UNOCHA Situation Report dated 5th March 2020 (p.3) and the ACAPS reference on page 1

² More detail can be found in the BBC and Chatham House publications on page 3

³ Roughly 55% of the country are Sunni, with 45% Shi'ite

protagonists which have opposed the Houthis, have included a Southern Movement of Tribes (SMT), together with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Islamic State (IS). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has accused Iran of supporting the Shi'ite Houthis, and relationships between these two countries have deteriorated since Houthi forces first launched missile strikes against Riyadh in November 2017⁴. Hudaydah is the main port servicing the Houthi-controlled territory, and a UN-brokered ceasefire in December 2018⁵, largely prevented to blockade of, and fighting over, this vital logistical hub. Fighting then broke out between STA and GoY forces in August 2019, but difficulties between the two parties were largely resolved as a result of the Riyadh Agreement in 2019. By March 2020, Yemen, was increasingly potentially threatened by the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic⁶.

Yemen: Areas of control and conflict



Current Humanitarian Situation⁷

With a population of 30.5 million, approximately 80% (24.1 million) of these people are in need of humanitarian assistance, with 14.3 million in severe need⁸. There are also over 3.5 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) who have fled their homes, largely due to conflict. Much of the country is food insecure, as witness the map in Appendix A, and the FEWS-Net reference on page 1. The areas which are most extreme are in the 10 out of the 22 Governorates in the west of the country, where conflict between Houthi and their opposing forces are most extreme. As in other similar humanitarian situations, it is the vulnerable innocent population which suffers the most, this including women, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. The key humanitarian assistance priorities remain food security, WASH⁹, shelter¹⁰, and health care, with outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and diphtheria occurring due to a combination of rainy season (for cholera) and collapse of the health care system. The United Nations launched its 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (see UNOCHA publication below) in February 2019. This was the largest in the world, amounting to USD 4.2 billion. By the end of December 2019 this had been met to the tune of 83%, with the major donors being Saudi Arabia, the US, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the UK, Germany, and the European Union.

⁴ Further, more serious, Houthi rocket attacks were then made against KSA oil refineries in September 2019.

⁵ The Stockholm Agreement

⁶ See the ACAPS report on the potential impact of this in the Publications section below

⁷ The clearest sources for this are the ACAPS, ReliefWeb, and Humanitarian Response sites on page 1, and the UNOCHA and WFP references on page 3.

⁸ See the ACAPS reference on p1, and UNOCHA Situation Report dated 5th March 2020 (p.3)

⁹ Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

¹⁰ Particularly for Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

Key Publications

- ACAPS. (2020). *COVID-19. Impact on Yemen*. <https://www.acaps.org/projects/covid19>
- ACAPS.(2020). *Yemen: Escalation of Conflict in al-Jawf and Marib Governorates*. https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200324_acaps_yah_briefing_note_escalation_of_conflict_in_marib_yemen.pdf
- Latest UNOCHA Situation Report (5th March 2020). <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/yemen>
- World Food Program (WFP). (Feb 2020). *Yemen Emergency Dashboard Infogram*. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000113261.pdf>
- BBC. (2019). *Yemen Country Profile*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704852>
- UNOCHA, Dec 2019. *Yemen, Humanitarian Response Plan 2019 – Funding Status* <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2019-funding-status-31-december-2019-enar>
- UNOCHA, Feb 2019. *Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2019*. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Yemen_HRP_V21.pdf
- UNOCHA. (2019). *Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2020¹¹* (particularly p.49): <https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2020>
- Chatham House (Salisbury.P). (2016). *Yemen: Stemming the Rise of a Chaos State* <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-05-25-yemen-stemming-rise-of-chaos-state-salisbury.pdf>

Further Information

For further information about Yemen, and particularly humanitarian consultancy or training associated with this, please contact Chris Piper, the TorqAid Director.

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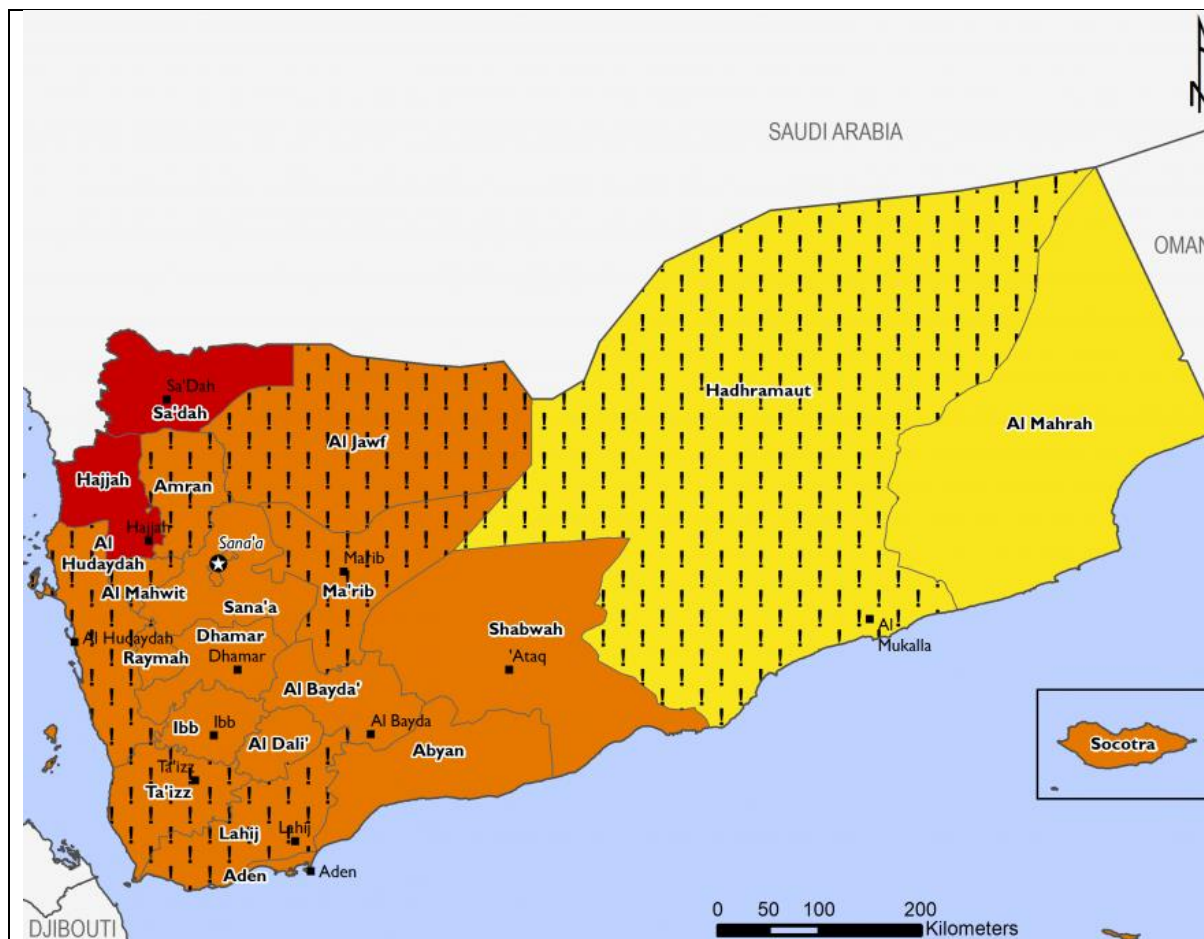


¹¹ Particularly the section on Yemen at page 49

APPENDIX A: FOOD SECURITY MAP FOR YEMEN FEBRUARY-MAY 2020¹²

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase¹³: Colours/Code:

1: Minimal 2: Stressed 3: Crisis (yellow) 4: Emergency (orange) 5: Famine (red)



¹² Map taken from the FEWS-NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network). (Feb 2020). *Food Security Conditions expected to deteriorate alongside future reductions in purchasing power -* <http://www.fews.net/east-africa/yemen>

¹³ The **Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity** grading (from IPC 1 to IPC 5) classification provides strategically relevant information to decision makers that focuses on short-term objectives to prevent, mitigate or decrease **severe food insecurity** that threatens lives or livelihoods