

# United Nations Yemen Common Country Analysis (CCA) November 2021



**UNITED  
NATIONS  
YEMEN**



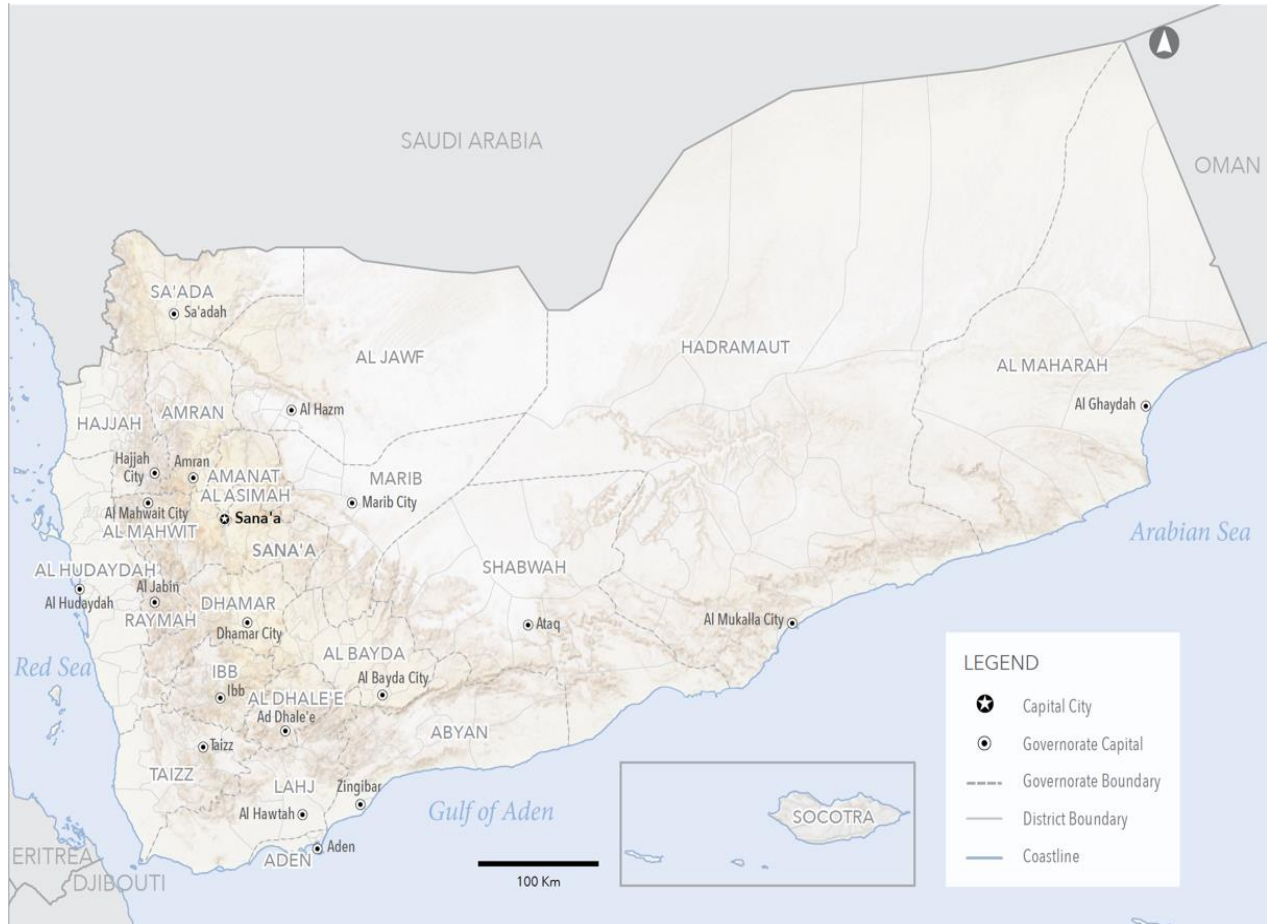
**Table of Contents**

<b>1. Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>2. Introduction</b>	6
2.1 Country context	6
<b>3. Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda &amp; SDGs in Yemen</b>	8
3.1 Political & Institutional Analysis	11
3.1.1 Humanitarian Context	11
3.1.2 Political Context	17
3.1.3 Legal Framework, Judiciary & Governance System	17
3.1.4 Partnerships	20
3.2 Economic Context Analysis	22
3.2.1 Employment/ Livelihoods	26
3.2.2 Manufacturing Sector	29
3.2.3 Fisheries	30
3.2.4 Access & infrastructure damage	31
3.2.5 Resilience	33
3.3 Environment & Climate Change Analysis	34
3.3.1 FSO SAFER	36
3.4 Social & Multidimensional Risk Analysis	38
3.4.1 Hunger, Food Security & Malnutrition	38
3.4.2 Health	42
3.4.3 Water & Sanitation	46
3.4.4 Education & Training	48
3.4.5 Social Protection	50
3.4.6 Gender Equality	51
3.5 Leave No One Behind Social Exclusion Analysis	55
3.5.1 Women & Girls	55
3.5.2 Children	56
3.5.3 Internally Displaced People	57
3.5.4 Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants	59
3.5.5 Persons with Disabilities	61
3.5.6 Ethnic & Religious Minorities	62
3.5.7 LGBTQ+	63
3.5.8 Cross-Cutting Areas of Leave No One Behind	63
3.6 Analysis of Compliance with International Human Rights, UN Norms & Standards	65
3.6.1 Gender Equality and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda	67
3.6.2 Landmines and Explosive Ordinance	68
3.7 Development, Humanitarian and Peace Linkage Analysis	68
3.8 Financial Landscape Analysis	70
3.8.1 Yemen Aid Environment	70
<b>4. Conclusions</b>	73
4.1 Cross-cutting Challenges & Opportunities	74
4.2 Economic Structural Transformation Challenges & Opportunities	74

4.3 Environmental Challenges and Opportunities	75
4.4 Social & Institutional Challenges & Opportunities	77
<b>References</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Annex 1 - Yemeni legislation &amp; international commitments relevant to gender justice</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Annex 2 - Human Rights Recommendations</b>	<b>84</b>

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1 - Yemen Country Map	
Figure 2 - Severity of needs in Yemen	
Figure 3 - Areas of control and conflict in Yemen	
Figure 4 - End of conflict in 2019, 2022 & 2030 & impact on the Human Development Index	
Figure 5 - The crisis in numbers	
Figure 6 - Severity of needs in Yemen for IDPs	
Figure 7 - The impact of war on SDGs	
Figure 8 - Yemen's global ranking across 8 development factors	
Figure 9 - Poverty measures and comparisons	
Figure 10 - Yemen's budget deficit	
Figure 11 - Yemen's oil rent (% of GDP)	
Figure 12 - Parallel Market Exchange Rates	
Figure 13 - Household engagement in agricultural activities	
Figure 14 - Main crops produced by household	
Figure 15 - SDG-9 Industry performance in Yemen. MVA	
Figure 16 - SDG-9 Industry performance in Yemen. CO2 Emissions	
Figure 17 - OCHA Humanitarian Access Snapshot 2019	
Figure 18 - FSO Safer Risk Impact Analysis Snapshot	
Figure 19 - Food insecurity snapshot	
Figure 20 - Worsening food insecurity map	
Figure 21 - Travel time to medical facilities	
Figure 22 - Grid water access	
Figure 23 - Infographic of recommendations following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review 2019	
Figure 24 - ODA to Yemen since 1990	
Figure 25 - Breakdown of ODA in Yemen	



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Creation date: 28 November 2018. Sources: GoY/MoLA/CSO.

Figure 1. Yemen country map

# 1. Executive Summary

This Common Country Analysis (CCA) is the United Nations (UN) system's independent, impartial, and collective assessment and analysis of the Republic of Yemen. It examines progress, gaps, opportunities, and bottlenecks vis-à-vis the country's commitments to achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN norms and standards, and the principles of the UN Charter.

Yemen was behind achieving the SDGs even prior to the escalation of armed conflict in 2015. The armed conflict has therefore not just interrupted Yemen's development trajectory; it has reversed development gains<sup>1</sup> made in key sectors up to 2014, with Yemen maintaining its status as the poorest country in the Middle East. Progress toward the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs continue to be delayed due to the on-going conflict, absence of coordinated national leadership, and lack of strategic planning. With control of the country divided between competing and warring parties, humanitarian, development, and peace efforts face significant challenges.

The 2021 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan indicates that the country faces severe food insecurity bordering on famine. About 24 million Yemenis – 80 percent of the total population – need humanitarian assistance; 14.4 million Yemenis are in acute need<sup>2</sup>. Over 2.25 million children under five years and more than a million pregnant and lactating women and girls are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021. Between 5 and 15 percent of pregnant women and girls are facing obstetric complications but lack access to emergency obstetric and newborn care services. Around 16.2 million people were expected to be hungry in 2020. Five million people face emergency conditions, and nearly 50,000 are already experiencing catastrophic conditions<sup>3</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased vulnerabilities in Yemen, however whilst there is a continual need for resilience and management of the pandemic's risks, there are opportunities for further progress through cooperation with authorities in Yemen. The opportunities around which are explored through this CCA.

The analysis within the CCA comprises seven elements covering politics and institutions; the economic contexts; environment and climate change; social and multidimensional risks; Leave No One Behind and social exclusion; compliance with international human rights and UN norms and standards; and the development, humanitarian, and peace linkages. The CCA concludes with a summary of the challenges, gaps, and opportunities for progress.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF Risk Analysis 2020

<sup>3</sup> UNDP CSN

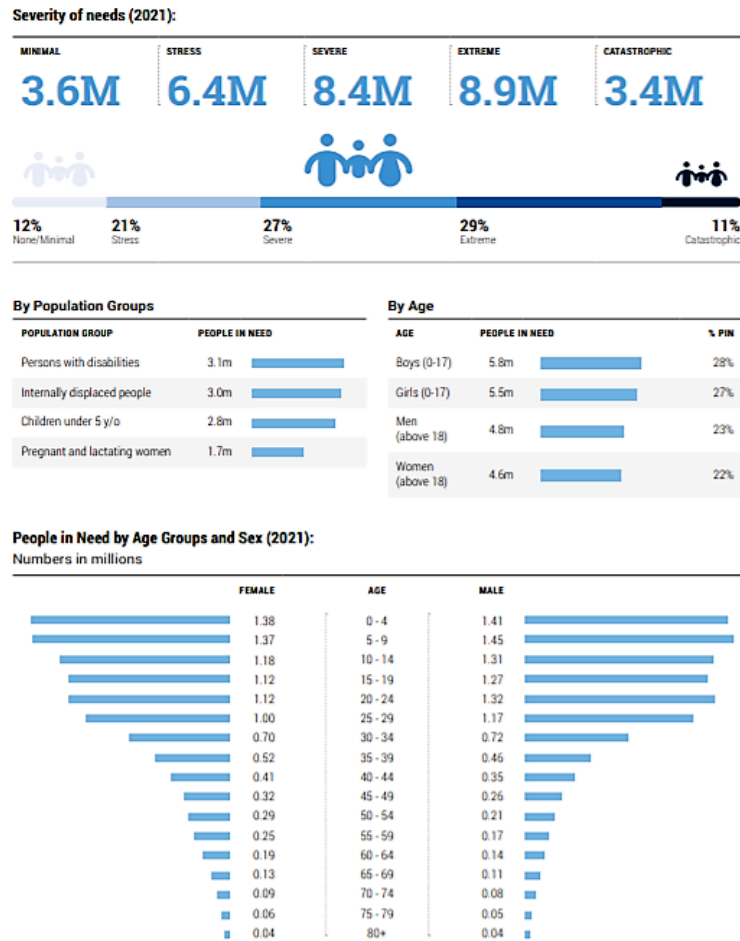


Figure 2. Severity of Needs in Yemen (2021). (Source: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021)

**Cross cutting challenges and opportunities**

*Ongoing Conflict* - The ongoing conflict has had a devastating impact on civilians. Since its onset, the war has caused an estimated 233,000 deaths, including 131,000 from indirect causes including complications arising from lack of food, lack of access to basic services such as health, water, sanitation, and nutrition, and poor or damaged infrastructure. Independent experts estimate that human development has been set back by 21 years. If conflict persists through 2030, it is assessed that development will be set back by nearly four decades<sup>4</sup>.

*Split & Warring Authorities* - Although the Riyadh Agreement (December 2020) allowed for the creation of a new Cabinet <sup>5</sup> there are still some significant differences and challenges facing the internationally recognized Government of Yemen, which threaten its cohesion and ability to govern. In contrast, the Ansar Allah movement has established a self-proclaimed government based in Sana’a, meets frequently and has a strategic vision for the country. This operating environment - with split and warring parties and separate governance structures - poses significant challenges to UN cooperation with authorities in the country.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP Impact of War on Development 2019

<sup>5</sup> A coalition of President Hadi’s officials and Southern Transitional Council members

*Health Pandemics* - It is difficult to contextualize the illness and death of household members amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen; the pandemic is occurring against a backdrop of high levels of undiagnosed or untreated chronic health conditions and communicable diseases including cholera, measles, and dengue, compounded by poor healthcare infrastructure and systems due to the damage caused by ongoing conflict where health, nutrition and water facilities have been targeted in the fighting.

*Human Rights* - The negative human rights situation on the ground reflects a situation where acts of war have been committed by all parties to the conflict and few commitments have been made towards meeting minimum human rights obligations in the execution of state and supranational state functions. The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen report released in September 2020 details scores of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The Secretary General's 2021 Report on Children in Armed Conflict highlights thousands of cases of grave violations against Yemeni children.

*Data Availability & Disaggregation* - The lack of systematic, whole-of-country data gathering, and monitoring is a challenge for the UN and partners. Major constraints are faced including the need for: (a) data to be more centralised and disaggregated (at least by gender, disability, ethnic groups, rural vs. urban), through the use of common templates – particularly in the social protection domain; (b) a greater range of quantitative data sources to inform programme design; (c) delivery and monitoring; and (d) more robust, critical and independent impact assessments of programmes and interventions.

*Infrastructure rebuilding* - The conflict in Yemen has destroyed or seriously damaged public and critical infrastructure. This includes water and sanitation, telecommunications, and transportation (including roads and ports), which require urgent rebuilding. In addition to the impacts of climate change, evidenced by surge of severe rainstorms and flooding, poor road conditions and poor access to reliable power will have significant negative impacts on other social services and will hamper ongoing and planned efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to millions of people in Yemen; especially poor and vulnerable groups in remote areas with already limited access to markets and critical services such as health, education, and WASH.

### **Economic context challenges and opportunities**

The political and economic situation in Yemen has been made more volatile through the presence of two currencies with different exchange rates, competing monetary and fiscal policies, and two Central Banks. This fragmentation, as well as a rise in unregulated financial businesses such as local money exchanges and cash suppliers, has hampered efforts to address economic stabilisation policies, creates costly distortions within the economy, and places extreme stress on the banking system. Steps need to be taken to ensure the harmonization of monetary and fiscal policy, allowing for economic recovery in Yemen including the establishment of a role for the private sector. There are opportunities for Yemen to diversify its economy by investing in the export production capabilities of export value chains including coffee, honey, and fish.

### **Environmental challenges and opportunities**

*Water Scarcity, Land Degradation & Climate Change* - The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index<sup>30</sup> ranks Yemen among the countries least prepared for climate shocks and among the most vulnerable to the climate crisis, with the country suffering from large-scale environmental destruction, land degradation, and water scarcity (for more than a decade, experts have been warning Sana'a may be the first capital in the world to run out of water). Yemen's

ability to appropriately respond is limited due to prolonged conflict, lack of preventive and restorative planning and implementation, and constrained resources.

The issue of the **FSO SAFER** represents a major environmental risk for Yemen. The FSO SAFER is a floating oil-storage and offloading vessel with an estimated 1.14 million barrels of crude oil on board, anchored a few miles off the coast of Al Hudaydah seaport. There are increasing concerns as to its structural integrity and considering the FSO SAFER is holding a cargo four times larger than the Exxon Valdez<sup>6</sup>, the environmental ramifications of a leak or explosion would be catastrophic. This potential catastrophe is considered imminent if efforts to access and address any structural issues are not undertaken.

### **Social and institutional challenges and opportunities**

*Hunger and Food Insecurity* – Yemen has significant food insecurity and faces the threat of famine. Malnutrition rates are at a record high and the IPC analysis of acute food insecurity projects that 16.2 million people will face high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) throughout 2021, driven by a range of factors including conflict, environmental shocks, and weak social, economic and governance systems. A caseload of nearly 2.3 million children under the age of five and more than a million pregnant and lactating women and girls with acute malnutrition is also projected in 2021<sup>7</sup>.

*Gender Equality and Women’s Rights* - Women and girls are acutely vulnerable in Yemen and the conflict has exacerbated gender inequality in the country, which has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA reports indicate that 2.6 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence and nearly 52,000 women are at risk of sexual violence including rape. Yemen ranks second last (155th of 156 countries) in the 2021 World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index<sup>8</sup>. Additionally, Yemeni women remain significantly under-represented in public and elected office holding only 4.1 percent of managerial and decision-making positions<sup>3</sup>.

*Rule of Law and Judiciary* - Judicial independence faces challenges. Judicial corruption is widespread with bribes and irregular payments being exchanged for favourable court rulings. The judiciary has been misused with political trials resulting in a large number of absentee defendants sentenced to death. Patronage systems also interfere in commercial disputes, and the judiciary is highly susceptible to political interference. Anti-corruption legislation has major loopholes and is not enforced. In much of rural Yemen, customary tribal law is applied with cases settled by tribal elites. This system is widely seen by Yemenis as more transparent, efficient, and effective than the state judiciary, which is considered weak. The impact of the use of customary law on human rights and women’s rights is also of concern.

*Displacement* - In 2020 alone, 172,000 people were displaced in Yemen, bringing the current total number of IDPs to 4 million or more – the fourth-highest level of internal displacement globally. More than 70 percent of IDPs in Yemen are women and children, and approximately 30 percent of displaced households are female headed compared to 9 percent before conflict escalated in 2015.<sup>9</sup> Many have experienced protracted and/or multiple displacement, straining their resources and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Moreover, the influx of large numbers of

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<sup>6</sup> The Exxon Valdez leaked oil into Prince William Sound in 1989 causing massive environmental damage

<sup>7</sup> HRP 2020

<sup>8</sup> Yemen was ranked last for the previous 13 years and only moved up with the addition of Afghanistan to the ranking, and not because gender parameters improved. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Yemen. 2021. [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#). February, p.28.



IDPs puts an additional burden on resources and infrastructure in hosting communities – many of which are conflict-affected with significant humanitarian needs.

*Protection of at-risk groups* - The ongoing armed conflict and large-scale displacement continues to affect civilians, particularly women, children, Muhamasheen, IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and other at-risk groups. Socio-cultural norms, limited social safety nets, lack of access to education, increased levels of poverty and poor-quality housing amplifying protection risks such as domestic violence, child labour, recruitment, and use (including of children), and child marriage increase their vulnerability. While traditional or tribal transitional justice systems may seek to address some of the issues, they do so often in disregard of human rights of the most vulnerable.

At risk groups face additional challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, epidemic-prone diseases, high levels of food insecurity, and limited access to primary healthcare services including water and sanitation services and childhood vaccination because of the overstretched health system with limited ability to provide primary health services. Inclusion of and frameworks for safe, dignified, and humane migration management is lacking, exacerbating risks of undocumented and documented migrants in Yemen seeking transit to other Gulf countries.

Ensuring no one is left behind in Yemen's complex country context requires a delicate integrated mix of inclusive humanitarian response, development programming and peace building in partnership with a range of actors. This is to ensure a response to gender equality and the empowerment of women, persons with disabilities, and those most at risk of being left behind. The UN system in Yemen has urgent responsibility for establishing this approach within its UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and in doing so, provide a foundation for greater resilience and sustainability moving forward.

## 2. Introduction

The purpose of this CCA is to inform the development of a Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2024<sup>10</sup> for Yemen by providing an independent, impartial, and collective assessment and analysis of the situation in the country for internal use. This CCA examines the progress, gaps, opportunities, and bottlenecks to achieving the 2030 Agenda, UN norms and standards, as well as an analysis and identification of marginalised groups and those most at risk of being left behind. This CCA has been developed by undertaking an in-depth desk review of documents including - but not limited to - the following:

- Assessing the Impact of War Report on Development in Yemen (2019),
- Socio-Economic Framework (SEF) 2020,
- Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment (FSLA),
- 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP),
- Child-centered Risk Analysis for Hazards and Peace in Yemen 2020,
- Situation Analysis of Women and Children 2020,
- UNICEF Yemen Gender Programme Review 2020,
- Yemen Humanitarian Fund Monitoring Report 2020,
- UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020,
- Agency plans and assessments,
- Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 2020,
- National Vision for the Modern Yemeni State 2020 (an Ansar Allah document - there is no Government of Yemen national strategy).

This CCA's drafting has been supported by informed consultations and interviews with senior members of the UNCT and UN specialists poised to provide expert localized advice and information. The CCA has prioritised the analysis of: progress on the 2030 Agenda; marginalized groups most at risk of being left behind including children and vulnerable women; integration of gender equality and women's empowerment as an essential condition to achieve Agenda 2030; and the gaps and risks apparent when seeking to meet the many and varied needs of Yemenis.

This CCA aims to provide background and a focus on the root causes of current and emerging risks and vulnerabilities. The developmental challenges and opportunities identified here represent some of the key (but not the only) building blocks that will underpin Yemen's UNSDCF 2022-2024. This CCA is a living document that will benefit from annual updates. As such, subsequent revisions could consider additional elements of analysis, such as SWOT analysis, in-depth informant interviews/consultations, focus groups, and partner perception surveys. With these inclusions, the sections of partnership identification and financing opportunities for Yemen could be strengthened.

### 2.1 Country context

Yemen has witnessed continual conflict for decades. In the early 20th century, Yemen was divided by the Ottoman empire who controlled the Northern regions, and the British empire who controlled the Southern regions. With the collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1918, Northern Yemen was largely ruled by the autocratic Zaydi Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen. After years of growing dissatisfaction, in 1962 a coup d'état was carried out by supporters of an

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<sup>10</sup> The UNDAF prior to this new UNSDCF was developed for the period 2012-2015 extended to 2020

independent Yemen Arab Republic, resulting in a two-year northern civil war. The Mutawakkilite Kingdom was defeated, and the Yemen Arab Republic ruled from 1962 to 1990.

In the South, increasing opposition to British rule resulted in an armed uprising between 1963 and 1967. In November 1967 British forces eventually withdrew and the independent Peoples Republic of South Yemen was proclaimed.

Relations between the Yemen Arab Republic and the Peoples Republic of South Yemen deteriorated and in 1972 the two states went to war. Peace was eventually brokered by the Arab League but despite this, Yemen faced more conflict and instability for the next 18 years. This included a civil war in the South and renewed fighting between the two states. Eventually in 1990 the Yemen Arab Republic and the Peoples Republic of South Yemen formally unified as the Republic of Yemen in 1990. It became the second largest country in the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia, Oman, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea. The country covers an area of 527,948 square kilometres and has a coastline of 1,906 kilometres.

Yemen has a population of approximately 30.5 million<sup>11</sup> (50.3 percent male, 49.6 percent female. Age 0-14 years: 39%; 15-24 years: 21%; 25-54 years: 32%; 55-64 years: 4%; and 65+ years: 2%). It is projected that the population will double by 2035. Life expectancy at birth is 65 for men and 68 for women<sup>12</sup>. The population is currently growing at a rate of 2.3 percent per year - a consistent decrease since 1990. Yemen has a low median age of 20.2 years (63 percent of the population are under 24 years of age) and a high fertility rate of 3.84 births per woman, which is significantly lower than it was in 2010, when it was 5 births per woman, contributing to the slowing population growth rate. The under-5 mortality rate is 58 (per 1,000 live births), and the maternal mortality rate is 164 (per 100,000 live births)<sup>13</sup>. The literacy rate for adults aged over 15 years is 54 percent (35 percent for women, and 73 percent for men), while youth (15-24 years) literacy is 77 percent (92 percent for males, and 60 percent females)<sup>14</sup>. Around 63 percent of Yemenis live in rural areas, down from 68 percent in 2010.

Viewed through a geopolitical lens, Yemen is of strategic importance. The Bab-el-Mandab Strait acts as a strategic link between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Of the 39.2 million barrels per day of crude oil imported by sea in 2020, 1.74 million barrels per day went through the Suez Canal<sup>15</sup>. Of international concern are human trafficking and smuggling and the conflict between Iran and its adversaries. Mass displacement and migration are other regional factors that contribute to the ongoing and renewed interest of the Gulf countries and the USA.

Two-thirds of the country is classified as hyper-arid with less than 50 millimetres (mm) of rainfall per year, and most of the rest is classified as arid with less than 200 mm rainfall. Only the western mountainous regions, where most of the population lives, receive annual rainfall above 250 mm, with some areas receiving 800 mm.

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<sup>11</sup> Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 2021. Consolidated by OCHA (on behalf of the humanitarian country team and partners).

<sup>12</sup> World Bank 2019

<sup>13</sup> World Bank data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=YE>

<sup>14</sup> World Bank data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.FE.ZS?locations=YE>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-suezcanal-oil-idINKBN2BI26C>

### 3. Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda & SDGs in Yemen

Illustrating the history of the conflict underscores how it has, and continues to, impact the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus in Yemen.

#### **Background to the present conflict**

Yemen has been embroiled in a complex political and military crisis since 2014. An escalation in violence between the government of Yemen and non-state armed actors including Ansar Allah in 2014, resulted in President Hadi requesting military support from a coalition of countries in March 2015. Since then, the country has witnessed escalating violence, that has decimated the economy, destroyed critical infrastructure, resulted in food insecurity verging on famine, and created one of the world's largest humanitarian emergencies.

In 2011, a political agreement was reached between then President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Yemen's opposition parties, which resulted in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative. This initiative was endorsed by the UN and resulted in the transfer of power to Vice President Hadi and became (alongside the Constitution), the country's legal framework. Article 4 of the GCC Initiative states, "The GCC Initiative and the Mechanism shall supersede any current constitutional or legal arrangements". Effectively therefore, the GCC Initiative has pre-eminence over the constitution by stipulating the authority of the president.

In September 2014 Ansar Allah, with the support of former President Saleh, seized the capital Sana'a. President Hadi was put under house arrest, where he remained for four months until he resigned in January 2015 and fled to Aden. When in Aden President Hadi withdrew his resignation, declared Aden as the new interim capital of Yemen and began establishing his government there. Ansar Allah and former President Saleh argued President Hadi could not withdraw his resignation once submitted and therefore they did not recognize the authority of his government. Alarmed by events in Yemen and the rise of a group they believed to be backed militarily by Iran, Saudi Arabia and eight other Arab states began an air campaign aimed at defeating Ansar Allah and restoring President Hadi's government in Sana'a. The coalition received logistical support from the US, UK, and France.

The conflict between Ansar Allah and President Hadi's government is now in its sixth year. The Government of Yemen with support from Southern Transitional Council and the Saudi led Coalition control much of the South and Southeastern territories. Ansar Allah controls the former capital Sana'a and much of the North and Northwestern territories.

A large proportion of the population live in areas under the control of Ansar Allah. These areas are facing increased oppression, political opponents and journalists have been imprisoned, cafes where men and women once mixed have been closed, and religious minorities have been persecuted. Blockades imposed by the Government of Yemen with the support of the coalition ostensibly to prevent weapons and war materials, have led to substantial increases in the prices of food and fuel as well as loss of livelihoods and incomes, which has pushed more people into food insecurity.

Importantly, despite these blockades, Ansar Allah continues to receive smuggled weapons and components for their drones and missiles. These weapons have enabled them to expand their war effort into additional territories, including into Saudi Arabia, when they have launched missile and drones against oil infrastructure and civilian airfields.

In June 2018, the Government of Yemen with the support of the coalition launched a major offensive to capture from Ansar Allah the Red Sea city of Al Hudaydah, whose port is vital for the importation of humanitarian supplies including food and medicines. At the time, the UN warned that the port's destruction would constitute a "tipping point" beyond which it was going to be impossible to avert massive loss of life due to famine. After six months of fighting, the warring parties agreed to restart peace talks in Sweden.

The subsequent Stockholm (Hudaydah) Agreement required both sides in January 2019 to redeploy their forces from Al Hudaydah, establish a prisoner exchange mechanism, and to address the situation in Taiz. Despite the agreement, between January 2019 and November 2021, forces largely remained in place, although hostilities substantially decreased.

In July 2019, under mounting international pressure to end the conflict in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a key ally of Saudi Arabia in the coalition, announced a withdrawal of its forces. The next month, fighting erupted in the South between the Government of Yemen and the southern separatist movement, the Southern Transitional Council (STC).

The Southern Transitional Council (STC) has long advocated for southern independence and in August 2018, the STC took control most of Yemen's four southern governorates and the interim capital of Aden. This violence ended when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia brokered the 'Riyadh Agreement', which has brought a very fragile peace between these two parties.

This complex environment in the South is exacerbated by the emergence of several other security forces and militias including the National Resistance forces, the Security Belt Forces, the Shabwani, and the Hardrami Elite forces, who all work independently from Presidents Hadi's government and control large swathes of the country. Also active are militants from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the local affiliate of the rival Islamic State group (IS).

As of November 2021, Ansar Allah are threatening to capture the city of Ma'reb, one of the last strongholds of the Government of Yemen situated 75 miles east of the capital city of Sana'a. Nearly 3 million Yemenis reside in Marib, including over a million internally displaced people.

The fight for Marib is important. If Ansar Allah takes control of Marib, it will give them control of oil and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in the north and would be a gateway to the oil fields in the east and south. All these factors threaten the long-term stability of the Government of Yemen.

Importantly, on 11 November 2021, forces aligned to the Government of Yemen withdrew from Al Hudaydah city to the border areas of Taiz Governorate. While undertaken ostensibly under the auspicious of the Hudaydah Agreement, it was also stated that these forces would reinforce and defend other front-line areas, including in Taiz, quite possibly in the event Ansar Allah take control of the city of Ma'reb.



Figure 3. Areas of control and conflict in Yemen. (Source: BBC)

The underlying issue of war profiteering

As in most conflicts peace is often hindered by elites who prefer the status quo, having profited off the war and humanitarian aid to consolidate their military power and financial strength. This is the same in Yemen. A small group of political elites have benefited considerably, while most of the Yemeni population is poorer and with even less opportunity for meaningful political participation in peace consultations. These dual inequalities—political and economic—have shaped the origins and trajectory of Yemen’s current civil war and as the war has continued, these inequities have deepened. Foremost among these beneficiaries is a small group of political elites among Ansar Allah who have gradually consolidated their political control of Yemen’s northern governorates.

Ansar Allah military commanders have profited significantly from the conflict, leveraging their physical control over key economic resources in the north for personal financial gain, including customs facilities and fuel import infrastructure. Such economic profiteering by military commanders has often disrupted traditional power structures within Yemen’s warring parties, particularly within the Ansar Allah movement. The growing influence of the STC is perhaps the most notable, as it has transformed a group of formerly marginalized southern separatists into one of the most powerful political forces in the south<sup>16</sup>.

Ansar Allah has seized millions in food aid provided by the international community to address food insecurity. Both Ansar Allah and Government of Yemen security forces have been implicated in stealing humanitarian medical supplies for their own use and weaponizing the financial system to their own political advantage, which is increasingly impoverishing Yemenis and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The Yemeni rial has lost more than one-half its value since the beginning of the conflict, dramatically reducing the wealth and buying power of regular Yemenis. But the erosion of the rial’s value has enriched political elites and financiers on both sides of the conflict through currency arbitrage. The benefit accruing to a small number of influential elites on both sides of the conflict contrasts strongly with the vast negative humanitarian impact of the crisis and a reason why some factions are willing to prolong the conflict<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> RAND 2021

<sup>17</sup> RAND 2021

### Regional and international interests in Yemen

Multiple regional and international parties have a stake in Yemen. KSA and the UAE remain long-invested regional parties to Yemen. KSA remains the top donor to the country, having pledged \$430 million in aid in 2021 (the largest amount pledged by any single country, two years running); and UAE pledging \$230 million. The US promised aid of \$191 million in 2021 (a decrease of \$35 million from 2020). Germany pledged \$241 million. Norway pledged \$23 million, the UK \$121 million, and the EU \$115 million<sup>18</sup>.

It is understood that the KSA would like to extract themselves from Yemen. Missile and drone attacks on Saudi ports and cities and raids inside the country by Ansar Allah have led to Saudi's crown prince calling for Ansar Allah to join him at the negotiating table, but Ansar Allah have ignored calls for a ceasefire as they advance on Marib.

US President Joe Biden recently announced that America wants to end the war in Yemen, considering it a "humanitarian and strategic catastrophe". The US has pledged to stop offensive arms sales to Saudi, has removed Ansar Allah from the list of international terrorist organizations, pledged to increase aid, and made efforts to kick start the peace process, which signifies a distinct change in Saudi/US relations.

### A humanitarian and development crisis

The conflict has had a devastating impact on civilian life, public institutions, and infrastructure. High levels of food insecurity and acute malnutrition have returned, driven primarily by conflict and its impact on food and nutrition security. Since 2020, the country has seen a significant drop in humanitarian funding. An economic downturn exacerbated by COVID-19, extreme climatic events such as heavy rains and flooding, as well as a desert locust infestation has exacerbated needs, perpetuated cycles of violence, and left the population mentally and physically scarred. The financial strain on families has led many Yemeni women to seek work outside the household. At the same time, the collapse and/or overburdening of services have had detrimental effects on women and girls who must take on this additional burden of care at home.<sup>19</sup>

Human-made crises including a failure of the parties to negotiate a peace deal, political dispute over the use of fuel import revenue which caused a fuel crisis, and extensive access obstructions and challenges that continue to hinder the delivery of assistance, have impacted donor confidence<sup>20</sup>. Although Yemen's development partners have developed innovative programmes, which have shown that humanitarian, development, and peace actors can find new ways to collaborate around the HDP nexus, the UN and the international community are faced with one of the worst humanitarian and development challenges in Yemen history.

## 3.1 Political & Institutional Analysis

### 3.1.1 Humanitarian Context

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains one of the worst in the world driven by conflict, natural disasters, hunger and disease coupled with a collapse of the economy and public institutions. The prospects for peace remain fragile, and efforts to bring the parties to the conflict back to the negotiation table are slow. Ever-growing humanitarian needs are now exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 and a persistent non-permissive operational environment due to security-related and administrative hurdles<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Deutsche Welle 2021 <https://www.dw.com/en/yemen-un-donor-conference-raises-a-disappointing-17-billion/a-56738853>

<sup>19</sup> Fawziah Al-Ammar, Hannah Patchett and Shams Shamsan. (2019) *A Gendered Crisis: Understanding the Experiences of Yemen's War*. Sana'a Center for Strategic Study. <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/8480>

<sup>20</sup> UNCT Report 2020

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

The Pardee Centre research suggests that there are *no* paths to significantly mitigating this complex hardship during the conflict, with different areas of Yemen experiencing the conflict in different ways, and as a result at varying development trajectories<sup>22</sup>. They propose that the only path forward is to complement humanitarian assistance with development and peacebuilding interventions in an environment where an end to conflict is anticipated.

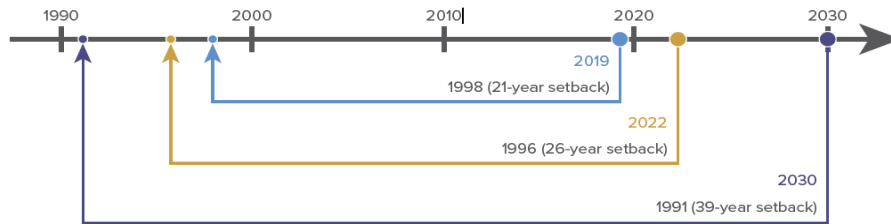


Figure 4. End of conflict in 2019, 2022 and 2030 and impact on the Human Development Index (Source: UNDP & PARDEE (Denver University) Impact of War Report 2020)

In 2021, UNDP reported that a child under the age of five dies every eight minutes as a result of continued conflict due to lack of access to water, food, and healthcare. Over the last six years, the conflict has reduced the size of Yemen’s economy by \$129 billion dollars (a 40.7 percent reduction) and has driven 15.7 million people into extreme poverty and 8.6 million more people into undernutrition relative to a world where conflict did not escalate in 2015<sup>23</sup>.

The conflict has had an enormous impact on civilians’ freedom of movement, livelihoods, and access to infrastructure and basic services and if conflict continues to 2030, UNDP estimates that: 1.3 million will die as a direct result of the conflict, with more than 70 percent of those deaths being the result of lack of access to food, healthcare, and resources. Most indirect deaths would be children under five years of age, with one child dying every five minutes in 2030. A conflict that would extend to that point would push 22 million additional people into extreme poverty and 9.2 million into malnutrition.

Yemen’s parties to the conflict continue to prioritise funding the conflict over addressing the humanitarian disaster. International support helped avert famine and further disaster in 2019 and 2020 but the underlying drivers of the crisis persist, and what little gains were made have stalled, leaving vulnerable populations increasingly less able to cope.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>23</sup> UNDP 2021 Recovery in Yemen



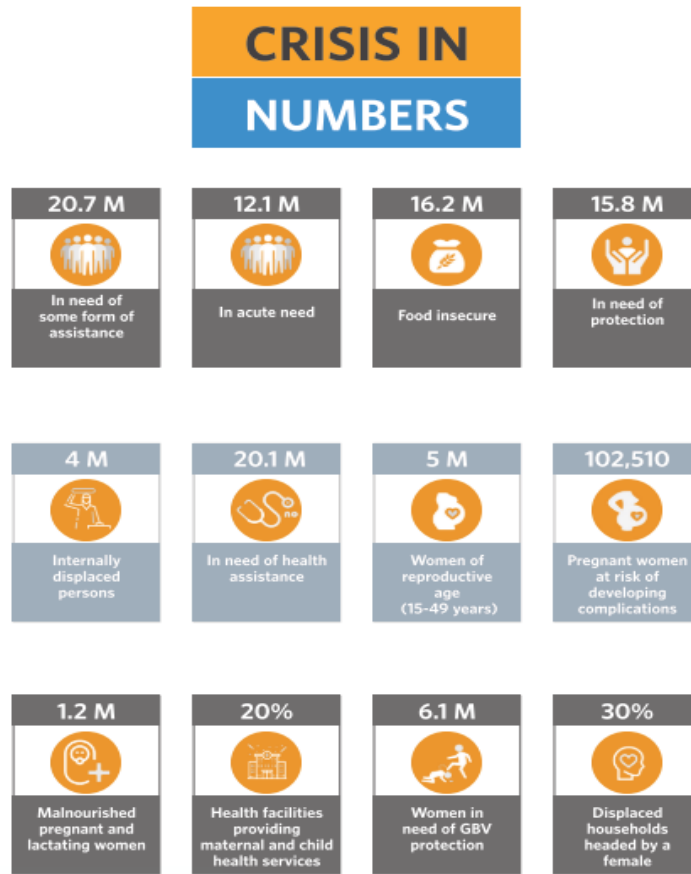


Figure 5. The crisis in numbers. (Source: UNFPA Humanitarian Response Report 2021) \* Women of reproductive age should instead refer to women of reproductive age and girls that have reached puberty.

In 2020 alone, 172,000 people were displaced in Yemen, bringing the current total number of IDPs to 4 million or more – the fourth-highest level of internal displacement globally.<sup>24</sup> Many are in a situation of protracted and multiple displacement, straining their resources and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Moreover, the influx of large numbers of IDPs puts an additional burden on resources and infrastructure in hosting communities – many of which are conflict-affected with significant humanitarian needs.

<sup>24</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Yemen. 2021. Humanitarian Needs Overview. February, p.28.

**Severity of humanitarian conditions and number of people in need**

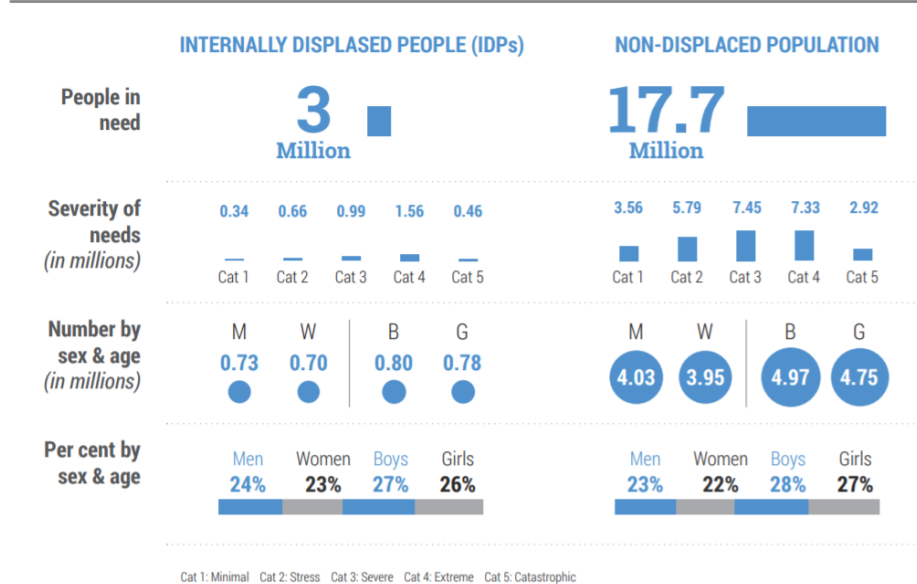


Figure 6. Severity of needs of IDPs (Source: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021)

On 1 March 2021, the UN’s appeal to fund Yemen’s humanitarian response raised US\$ 1.7 billion. This was half of what was requested and needed to address the immense humanitarian challenges in the country. Furthermore, COVID-19 is predicted to result in an enormous loss of life and a further weakening of an already devastated health sector and weak national economy<sup>25</sup>.

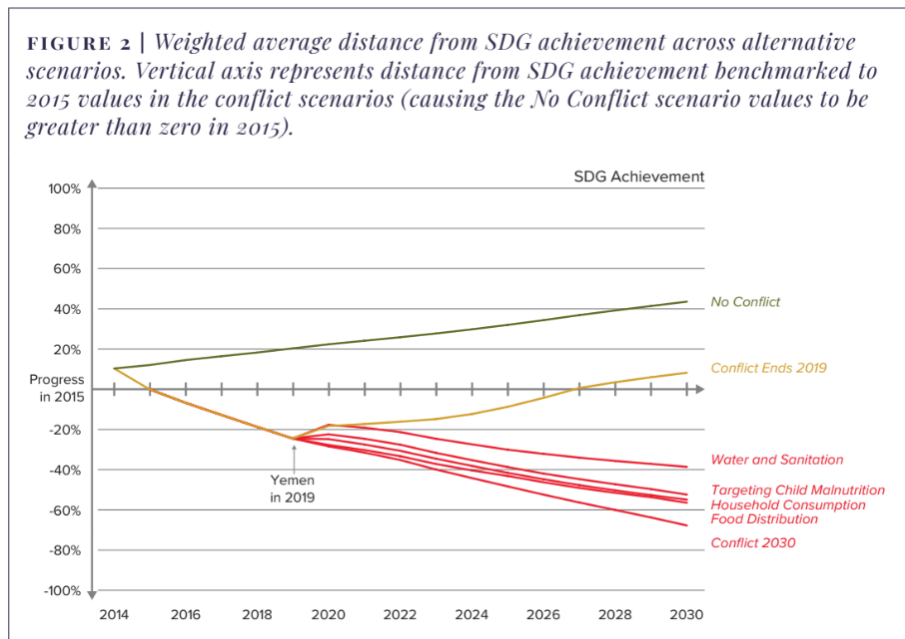


Figure 7. The impact of war on the SDGs. (Source: UNDP & PARDEE - Impact Of War Report 2020)

<sup>25</sup> Strategic Framework for an Immediate Response to COVID-19 in Yemen

Poverty in Yemen is worsening. Before the crisis it affected almost half Yemen’s total population of about 29 million, now it affects an estimated three-quarters of it—71 to 78 percent of Yemenis. Women and girls are more severely affected than men and boys<sup>26</sup>. Significantly, households headed by women and girls are at higher risk of food insecurity due to a lack of work opportunities and low wages relative to men.<sup>27</sup> There has been a 20 percent increase in the number of female-headed households; many, if not most, have no steady source of income, exposing these families to risks of exploitation, harassment, and abuse.<sup>28</sup>

If the conflict persists through 2030, not only will the overwhelming portion of Yemenis live in poverty, but the depth of poverty will possibly be the worst in the world. The population will overwhelmingly be malnourished, and many of those who survive will face lifelong stunting, along with the associated impacts on health and development, education, and productivity (where children can access education, malnutrition affects their ability to learn). The economy will be fundamentally altered, with GDP per capita ranking among the worst globally. Severe inequality will tear at the social fabric, making Yemen more vulnerable to an ongoing and vicious cycle of conflict, regional instability, and suffering. As Figure 5 above indicates, if conflict continues through 2030, efforts to meet SDGs will face substantial setbacks.

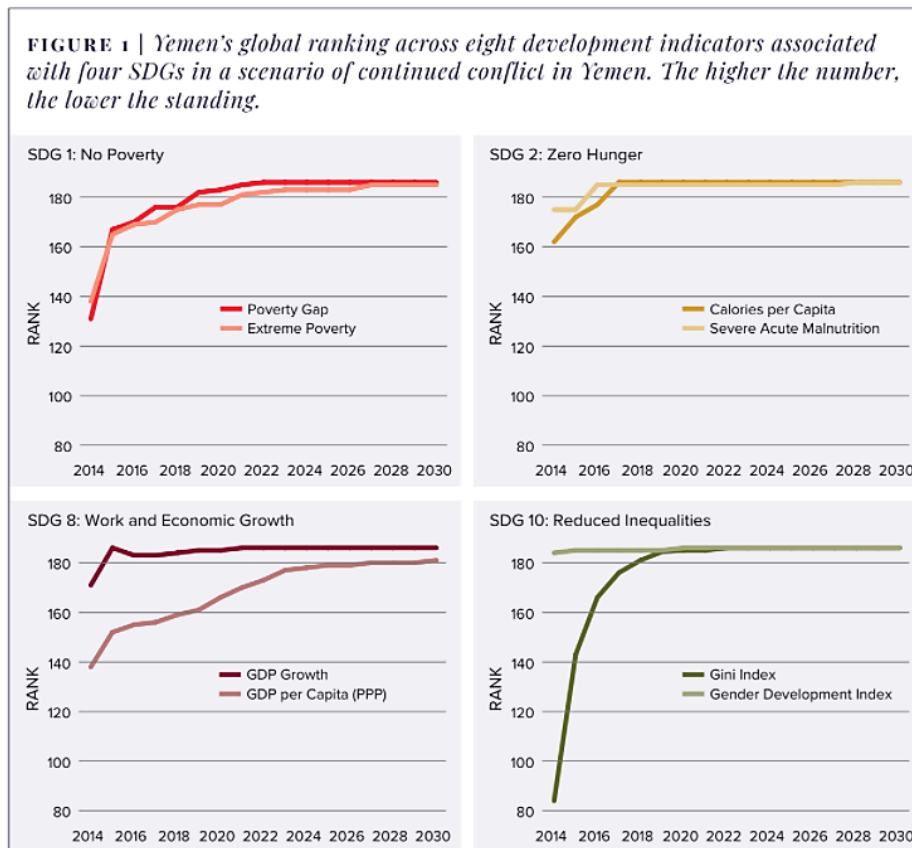


Figure 8. Yemen's global ranking across 8 development indicators (Source: UNPD & PARDEE - Impact Of War Report 2020)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/overview>

<sup>27</sup> CARE, IASC GenCap and Oxfam. 2016. *From the Ground Up: Gender and Conflict Analysis in Yemen*, p.12 & 39.

<sup>28</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Yemen. 2021. *Humanitarian Needs Overview*. February, p.81.

Data on the incidence of monetary and multidimensional poverty are highly limited since the escalation of conflict but work by the Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies suggests that the humanitarian crisis has eroded the middle class. Rural poverty rates were substantially higher than urban poverty rates before the crisis.

With an estimated 64 percent of the population residing in rural areas, there is a large rural child poverty burden in the country. Pre-crisis data paints a compelling picture with respect to multidimensional poverty in children. Based on analysis of data from Yemen’s 2013 DHS, 76.4 percent of children (under 18 years) experience moderate poverty and 48.8 percent experience acute poverty meaning that most children are deprived of access to essential basic services and social infrastructure including education, health, nutrition, water, and sanitation. Due to a lack of evidence, the current situation vis-à-vis multidimensional child poverty is unknown.

**TABLE 3 | Poverty measures in a No Conflict scenario, in a scenario with conflict, and the conflict-attributable difference between the two.**

	Poverty in a No Conflict Scenario				Poverty in a Conflict Scenario				Conflict-Attributable Difference*			
	2014	2019	2022	2030	2014	2019	2022	2030	2014	2019	2022	2030
Per cent of population under USD 1.90/day	18.8	18.7	15.4	6.6	18.8	58.3	64.8	77.6		39.6	49.4	71
Per cent of population under USD 3.10/day	47.3	45.9	40.7	24.4	47.3	75	79.4	87.8		29.1	38.7	63.4
Millions of people under USD 1.90/day	4.9	5.6	4.9	2.5	4.9	17.3	20.7	30.1		11.7	15.8	27.6
Millions of people under USD 3.10/day	12.4	13.7	13	9.2	12.4	22.3	25.4	34.1		8.6	12.4	24.9
Poverty gap index (USD 1.90)	4.5	4.7	3.5	0.9	4.5	31.7	38	52.1		27	34.5	51

\*Where the unit is a per cent, the conflict-attributable difference is presented in percentage points.

**FIGURE 5 | Poverty gap for two scenarios for Yemen and select other countries.**

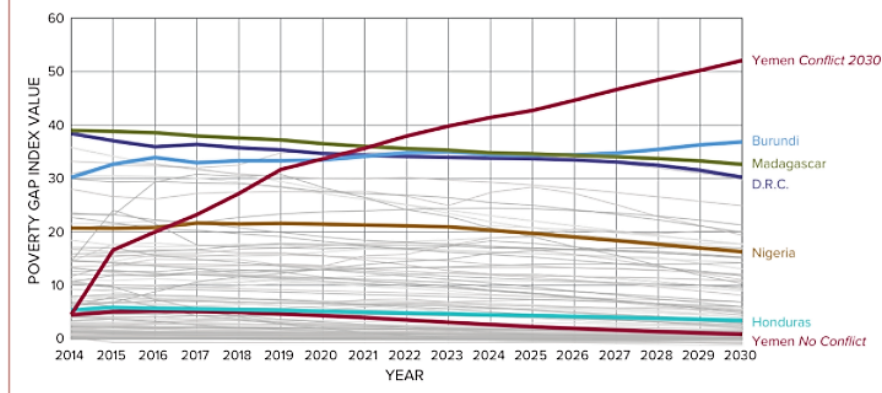


Figure 9. Poverty measures and comparisons (Source: UNPD & PARDEE - Impact Of War Report 2020)

### 3.1.2 Political Context

The political context in Yemen is divided, with Ansar Allah “governing” the north, and the Government of Yemen/STC coalition ruling in the south.

Ansar Allah meets as a Parliament regularly and has produced a *National Vision for the Modern Yemeni State (2019)* that sets out a detailed and aspirational development plan, which recognizes the massive scope of work needed to achieve progress in the country, even if there is little or no institutional capacity to deliver. Its vision is “a modern, democratic, stable and unified Yemen which rests on having strong institutions, the realization of justice, the pursuit of development and a dignified life and standard of living for Yemeni citizens, the protection of the independence of the nation and seeking world peace and appropriate equal cooperation with the other countries of the world.”

The Government of Yemen/STC coalition, however, does not have the same level of cohesion nor has it developed a National Vision document. The security situation on the ground in southern Yemen remains volatile and conflict exists between central and subnational authorities regarding who has the legitimacy to regulate society and control economic activity. Effectively, “the central government has either collapsed or lost control of large segments of the territory over which it is nominally sovereign; and a political economy has emerged in which groups with varying degrees of legitimacy cooperate and compete with one another. Yemen more closely resembles a region of mini-states at varying degrees of war with one another and beset by a complex range of internal politics and conflicts”<sup>29</sup>.

While a political settlement between the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah “might once have been able to end the war and return the country to a political transition”, subsequent shifts in the military balance, political and territorial fragmentation, and heavy-handed regional intervention have changed peace-making requirements. A more inclusive, UN-brokered, multiparty settlement is needed, along with interim governance arrangements that avoid rapid re-centralisation of power in Sana’a to the benefit of just one or two groups”<sup>30</sup>. Noting the historical and tribal divisions, without the buy-in of these various groups, a peace settlement is unlikely to be sustainable. A more holistic approach to peacebuilding, that champions inclusive peacebuilding efforts and the crucial roles of Yemeni women and civil society and recognizes existing power dynamics is necessary.

### 3.1.3 Legal Framework, Judiciary & Governance System

Even before the civil war began, decades of political disenfranchisement and economic marginalization have led to a situation where many Yemenis distrust the central government and will likely look sceptically at any elite pact that ends the conflict with a unified state. Distrust of government in Yemen is pervasive. Unfortunately, the weakness or sheer absence of formal governing institutions in Yemen has allowed ordinary grievances to escalate into conflict, leaving many local conflicts to be resolved informally. Informal local mediation however can be highly effective in Yemen as a result<sup>31</sup>.

Under Yemen’s 1991 Constitution, a President is elected and named head of state. The Prime Minister is the head of government. President Ali Abdullah Saleh was the first elected President in 1991, in unified Yemen. The country’s legal system consists of separate commercial courts and the Supreme Court in Sana’a. The Constitution calls for an independent judiciary system, with Sharia as the main source of law in the country. The country’s legal system is also based on the Napoleonic system and Egyptian Law.

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<sup>29</sup> Salisbury 2017, as quoted in UNDP CSN

<sup>30</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>31</sup> RAND 2021

The age of criminal responsibility in Yemen is seven years old, which is not in line with international standards for juvenile justice. As previously mentioned, the judiciary faces serious problems over its independence and widespread corruption. The state judiciary is weak and customary tribal law is preferred by Yemenis as it's considered more transparent, efficient, and effective, however the consequences of applying tribal law on human rights and women's rights are problematic. The judiciary has been misused with political trials resulting in many absentee defendants sentenced to death in the north, while in Government of Yemen-controlled areas, the judiciary has effectively been paralyzed since it was formally established in February 2021. The weak justice system affects vulnerable groups such as women and children.

The state institutions in Yemen are underdeveloped and under-resourced, lack power and authority within society, and are unable to perform its core functions. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) is responsible for overall SDG progress but again, capacity is limited. Furthermore, MoPIC in Sana'a has been split, with the creation of another entity with a different mandate (called the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation - SCMCHA), which was established by Republican Decree and undermines the Yemeni Constitution on governance structure.

Yemen's governance system is therefore dysfunctional. It concentrates power in the hands of an elite minority; has failed to lift the country out of poverty, has deepened gender inequality and women's under-representation in public office. Further, its patronage networks and system of pervasive corruption have proliferated and prevented the development of strong state institutions and impaired the provision of quality basic services and security in large swaths of the country. The country remains close to the bottom (176 out of 180 countries) of Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perception Index<sup>32</sup>.

The conflict has also contributed to higher regional inequalities than ever in the country representing another impediment to future peace. The Yemen Arab Republic cooperative movement of the 1970s and 1980s was mostly positive and offers a different vision for rural Yemen, where the only participatory mechanism was tribal.

Since 2014, most local councils' political legitimacy, and human and financial resources, at governorate and district levels have shrunk dramatically as the political and security conflict has penetrated subnational government structures. Central government transfers, including salaries and investment capital to local councils, have stopped or are irregular. Subnational administrations operate without the technical oversight and support of specialised government agencies, often leading to leakage of funds due to corruption.

This is due to the practiced central fiscal subsidy, which has undermined the local authority's financial autonomy (as per the local authority law of 2000). It is the root cause that has created dependency on central fiscal subsidies by local authority. Removing this fiscal subsidy scheme and empowering local authority's full financial autonomy has been one of the prolonged pending public reforms.

Only a handful of these (water, agriculture, and livestock) continue providing support to service delivery in some areas, both at a reduced level and mostly when international actors pay their operating expenditures. Despite this, some subnational authorities (mainly the local executives and their administrations) have demonstrated a great

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<sup>32</sup> UNDP CSN

deal of resilience when receiving some support<sup>33</sup>. In some areas, local revenue sources obtained as non-legislated taxes and fees have partly compensated the lack of or reduced central government budget allocations. The Berghof Foundation<sup>34</sup> emphasises that “Governorates benefiting from oil income and control over trade routes have been able to maintain or expand local services, while most others have seen a collapse in service provision and local administration.”

At the community level in rural and urban areas, committees<sup>35</sup> organise needs assessments, plan and implement small interventions, monitor aid distributions, and are a space for collective decision-making for both men and women. The committees both cushion the impact of the conflict on social cohesion and make decision-making accessible to women and youth. Informal local structures operate by drawing their legitimacy from tribal customs, which play an essential role in local conflict resolution, administering justice, and providing security. Yemenis have relied on indigenous tribal traditions to regulate conflict and establish justice for centuries. Tribal mechanisms – which typically exclude women and youth – did effectively handle conflicts between various tribes, between tribes and extractive companies, and between tribes and the government.

Studying options for engaging with women and youth would bolster these mechanisms because prominent Yemeni tribal women have played important roles in mediating conflicts between tribes and in family and other disputes. They managed to provide a reasonable level of security within their territories and along the main roads that connect tribal territories. Tribal leaders tend to play a positive role in their area of influence, where their function has evolved as representatives of the tribe to the state. Their role as actors in national politics seems less constructive as many disregard state law and can be a source of conflict. Some of Yemen’s tribal leaders are politically aligned. They use resources of the state to control land and access resources, particularly in rural regions where economic activity yield spoils in areas associated with oil, gas, and the construction of roads and utilities, among others.

On the other hand, it has been argued that tribal leaders and citizens in the tribal areas of al-Bayda, al-Jawf, Marib, and Shabwa are eager to see legitimate and functioning state institutions in their areas and have the desire and willingness to achieve it. Tribal governance and conflict resolution traditions have a role to play in helping to ease tensions and mitigate conflicts that will arise as Yemen moves toward political transition. At the subnational level, tribal mechanisms for conflict resolution should be integrated with the formal system so that they work alongside and complement formal institutions.

Engagement with subnational formal and informal authorities is essential. Any form of engagement should build on a thorough knowledge of local conflict and power and gender dynamics to avoid perpetuating existing and inequitable power structures that have the potential to create new grievances<sup>36</sup>. This engagement should also seek to address gender inequalities, ensure that women are consulted on their needs related service delivery, design, and plans.

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<sup>33</sup> Or even in the absence of support, as for example in Marib and some districts of Taiz.

<sup>34</sup> Berghof Foundation, Mapping of local governance in Yemeni Governorates, January 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Often supported by the Social Fund for Development (SFD). SFD was established by Law No. 10 of 1997 and is fully funded by the international community. SFD supports development opportunities through improving access to basic services, enhancing economic opportunities, and reducing the vulnerability of the poor as well as building capacities at national, subnational, and community levels.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP CSN

### 3.1.4 Partnerships

The stakeholder and partnership landscape in Yemen consists of UN agencies, donors, International NGOs, and local civil society organisations involved in the humanitarian response. The diplomatic community is absent from the country, due to the prolonged conflict and complex political operating environment, which has affected the development of an active partnership framework. Despite this, the UNCT has worked to diversify its resource and partnership base to advance Yemen's SDG goals and has identified several structures and mechanisms that would support a diversified programme response in the future. These include:

- Integration of development programmes in Yemen's heavily humanitarian context, requiring a coordination platform that can support dialogue on collective outcomes, find practical modalities for operational coherence, and create an integrated reporting and monitoring system.
- Establishing multi-stakeholder working groups involving local and national authorities, donors, women and gender advisors, civil society, and the private sector.
- Joint work plans that include a mapping effort at sector level that would support enhanced delivery, coordination, capacity building, and joint efforts to scale up for results.
- More in-depth dialogue on collective outcomes, practical modalities for operational coherence, and integrated reporting and monitoring systems.
- Concerted strategy to guide and address the multiple challenges facing gender equality promotion and the advancement of women's and girls' rights in Yemen, given that Yemen has remained at the bottom of the Global Gender Gap for over a decade.

#### Private sector

There are successful interventions with civil society including, the local media, NGOs, civil society, think tanks and women's organisations, and the private sector that have encouraged the participation of youth and women, enhancing the outcomes of projects<sup>37</sup> and giving further opportunity to building ambitious public-private partnerships with the sector in the context of investment in infrastructure and local service delivery. The Yemeni private sector suggests there is poor consultation and involvement, even in matters and decisions that affect them directly. The economic needs and opportunities of women and girls, youth and persons with disabilities requires further study to ensure integration of their needs into economic and private sector development programming in support of their economic empowerment.

The donor community has a role to play in strengthening their voice and supporting their attempts to improve regulatory and business practices, including the tax environment and monetary policy<sup>38</sup>. The Yemen context would benefit from strengthened partnerships between the international donor community, Business Membership Organisations, and key private institutions such as the Federation of Yemeni Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FYCCI) and the Yemen Business Club (YBC).

There is opportunity for the UN and donors to support the neutrality of the private sector to prevent its polarisation via the development of the local Chambers of Commerce and through connections with civil society<sup>39</sup>. Despite the many challenges confronting the Yemeni private sector, it has the potential to make a major contribution to job creation and investment and to reach vulnerable communities in ways that donor agencies may not.

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<sup>37</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>38</sup> World Bank 2019

<sup>39</sup> SEF 2020



Material and technical support to women interested in entrepreneurship should also be a high priority. It is a sector with considerable experience and expertise and is deeply embedded in the Yemeni social and economic fabric, which can be relied upon to achieve better and less expensive programme execution. It needs support and strengthening, financially and otherwise, given the business and political climate in which it operates<sup>40</sup>. The sector may be more involved in efforts to provide humanitarian/development assistance via, for example, the various clusters operating in Yemen and building on the existing engagement with UNDP, the WB and other development partners.

Direct support to MSMEs and informal enterprises has shown promise. MSME employment creation is a critical element of livelihood support to an overall dwindling labour force (36 percent) – female labour force participation is a mere 6 percent<sup>41</sup>. Studies show that support can be most effective in sectors that have both productive potential and that serve the needs of the poor – including food, meat and poultry, fisheries, beekeeping and/or honey, solar energy, handloom and/or textile, and pottery. In programs such as Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY), support for business has been provided in the form of seed funding and access to micro-finance and skills – conditioned upon job creation and gender inclusion in the labour force.

Evaluations of past interventions show that MSMEs have responded most effectively in the food and solar sectors<sup>42</sup>. Studies have also shown that unless a deliberate focus is placed on job creation and female inclusion by MSMEs, these objectives may fall short despite the high success rate of MSMEs established by women entrepreneurs<sup>43</sup>.

A continuous focus is needed on strengthening the education system and skills training, particularly for youth and women, aligned with labour needs and job opportunities. The international community and national institutions support micro-financing interventions in Yemen. Micro-financing and other forms of funding support are needed to support MSME establishment, survival, and development in the COVID-19 response and recovery phases. Micro-financing activity is limited with 12 micro-finance institutions and 163 country-wide branches – some public, but the majority private and donor-funded. The ability of several of these to operate and/or operate optimally has been severely affected by the conflict and their reach – especially in rural areas – is limited. It is suggested that, combined, they have less than 100,000 customers. Yet, impressive inroads have been made.

Micro-finance institutions have the potential to play a role in future programming. Capacity-building is needed in digital transformation of operations and processes, marketing to stimulate financial inclusion, sector-specific lending methods to revive markets, the piloting of new Islamic financial products, introductory intensive microfinance training for newly hired, and evaluation of sector performance. As MSME grant or loan funding support, personalised advice, and technical assistance have been indicated as major hurdles, other support and/or funding mechanisms that go beyond matching grants would suit the Yemen context and would need to consider the inability of many small-scale entrepreneurs to afford setting-up and managing MSMEs or informal enterprises<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> World Bank 2019

<sup>41</sup> ILO 2016

<sup>42</sup> World Bank 2020 and UNDP 2020

<sup>43</sup> UNDP 2019 and UNDP 2020

<sup>44</sup> SEF 2020

### National Institutions

Working with select national institutions has demonstrated that implementing through national institutions such as the Social Fund for Development (SFD), Road Maintenance Fund (RMF) and the Public Works Project (PWP) has produced rapid and cost-effective results where capacity has been scaled-up. This can be seen through the WB/UNDP/UNICEF Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project (YECRP) and the WB/UNOPS Yemen Integrated Urban Services Project (YIUSEP).

The neutrality and impartiality of these institutions has enabled the UN to operate throughout the country, even in areas where UN entities have restricted access. In the absence of formal government counterparts, these national institutions have shown that they can work directly with communities. Their community-based targeting in a recent evaluation was rated as highly responsive to local needs and accountable to beneficiaries. Given their knowledge on the ground, the national institutions have shown an ability to use a flexible approach that allowed for agility in changing circumstances.

Additionally, their mainstreaming of conflict sensitive approaches is seen as having contributed to local peacebuilding efforts. Similarly, other WB projects have worked with pre-2015 Project Implementation Units and have reported positive results in areas such as health, infrastructure, energy, and education. This demonstrates that – rather than using expensive external mechanisms to ensure fiduciary controls – it is possible to gradually move to using the rules of these institutions, relying on post implementation evaluations to improve speed and flexibility.

### Local authorities

Support for local governance is considered important in the Yemen context. Local authorities can be resilient in sustaining service delivery at the local level, despite the absence of effective central authority support. Whilst working with local authorities is uncommon among donors, consultation and coordination with local authorities as well as capacity building of local authorities remain important for sustainable interventions and service delivery at a local level.

### Communities

For most donors, projects that rely on gender-based community consultation and engagement that include the involvement and participation of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, have proven to be successful and scalable. This has allowed for local ownership and bottom-up planning for an integrated preparedness, resilience, conflict resolution and humanitarian response to the needs of vulnerable people, including the importance of enhanced access for women to different resources and opportunities.

## 3.2 Economic Context Analysis

The size of Yemen's economy has shrunk by more than half since the conflict began. Over the last six years, the conflict has reduced the size of Yemen's economy by \$129 billion dollars (a 40.7 percent reduction), there has been increases in food prices, a rapid increase in public debt and an exchange rate crisis<sup>45</sup>. The collapse is most visible in fall of real income, depreciation of the Yemeni rial's value, sharp decline of public revenues, rising commodity prices and import restrictions, including fuels<sup>46</sup>. Public sector salary payments remain irregular especially in the northern governorates, affecting service delivery and impacting purchasing power<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> UNICEF SitAn

<sup>46</sup> HRP

<sup>47</sup> UNCT Report 2020

The deteriorating macro-economic environment in Yemen is creating two types of risks: household inability to cope with higher food prices; and state authority inability to deliver basic services. The delivery of basic services relies on civil servant salaries being paid on time. There is an acute risk of greater malnutrition, and even famine, if more foreign exchange reserves are not available in the country.

These risks are interrelated as poor fiscal and monetary policy leads to deficit monetisation and devaluation pressures, and low inflows of foreign exchange lead to increased poverty and more pressure on the budget. Macro-economic improvement requires progress in the peace talks including the consolidation of the ceasefire and progress in the application of UN-proposed confidence building measures – particularly as it relates to border crossing, ports management, custom revenues, payment of civil servants' salaries, and coordination of monetary policies. These measures will directly improve the delivery of basic services, the investment climate, and reduce the risks of devaluation. Moreover, they will also indirectly remobilise external support for Yemen<sup>48</sup>.

At the height of oil prices and exports in 2008, oil revenue hovered around 30 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2019, due to lower international prices and reduced production<sup>49</sup> oil revenues fell to 8.5 percent of GDP. The 2019 budget produced a 5 percent – largely monetised – deficit-to-GDP ratio, creating inflationary pressures<sup>50</sup>.

Yemen: Budget balance between 2016 to 2026 in relation to GDP

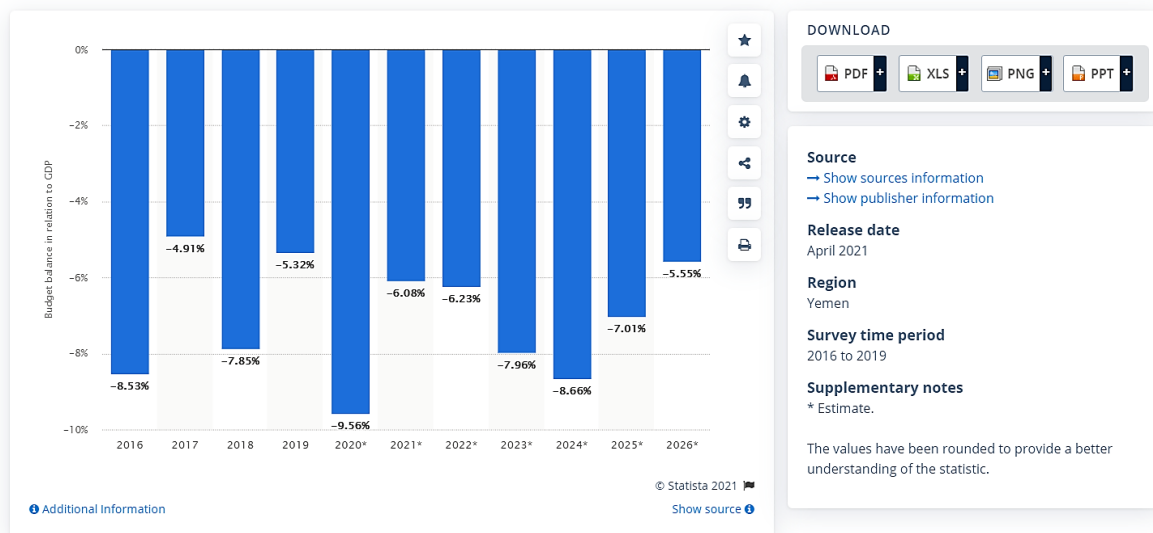


Figure 10. Yemen budget deficit (Source: Statista <https://www.statista.com/statistics/524154/yemen-budget-balance-in-relation-to-gdp/>)

<sup>48</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>49</sup> Since the start of the conflict, oil and LPG production came to a halt. In 2019, a production resumed but with limited quantities not even enough to cover domestic demand.

<sup>50</sup> UNDP CSN

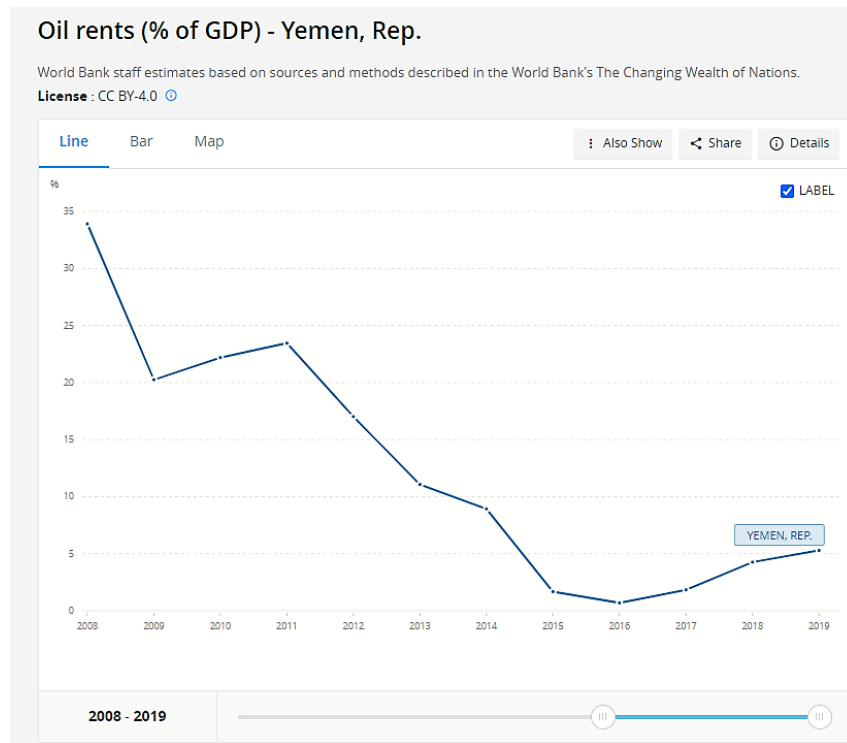


Figure 11. Yemen’s oil rent (% of GDP) (Source: World Bank 2021)

The combination of (a) the COVID-19 crisis and reduced oil revenue; (b) a predicted reduction in remittance as the economic slowdown hits the Yemeni diaspora; (c) a decline in humanitarian assistance; (d) the near exhaustion of the KSA grant<sup>51</sup>; and (e) the chaos surrounding the Presidential decree to the headquarters of the Central Bank of Yemen to Aden all point to an increasing fiscal deficit in 2021 and beyond. This could trigger a further depreciation of the Yemeni rial, especially in the South, which would raise the price of food and further exacerbate many Yemenis’ ability to buy food<sup>52</sup>.

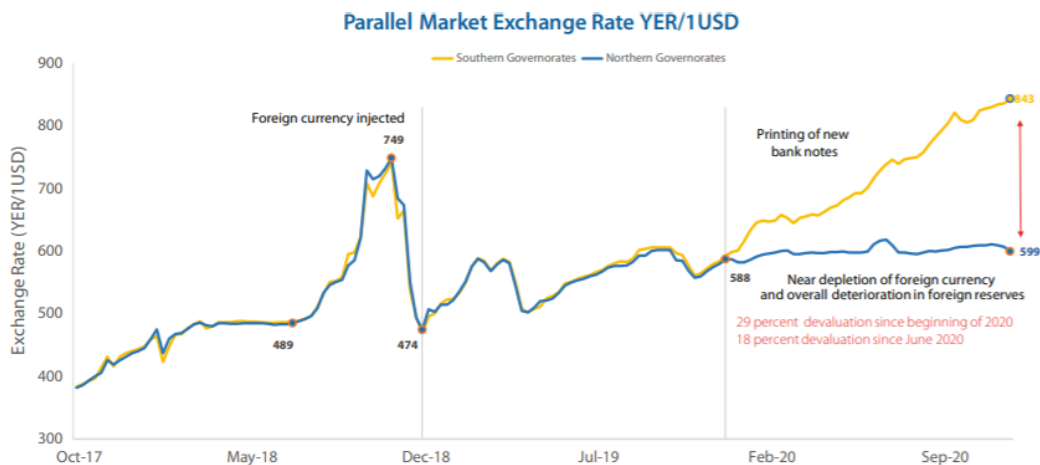


Figure 12. Parallel Market Exchange Rates (Source: Yemen IPC 2020)

<sup>51</sup> US\$ 2 billion Saudi that pays for the food import letters of credit system.

<sup>52</sup> UNDP CSN

Waves of currency depreciations in 2018 and 2019 have seen continued inflationary pressure on the purchasing value of the Yemeni rial that has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. The disruption of infrastructure and financial services has severely affected private sector activity. Yemen continues to face significant risks of renewed macroeconomic volatility. Without stable sources of foreign exchange, the Yemeni rial is vulnerable to downward pressures. KSA's deposit, which financed essential imports, is close to depletion and increased hydrocarbon exports are highly uncertain due to the poor national oil production and export capacity, the bleak outlook of the global oil market, and the fragmented multiple exchange rate regimes in the country. A further rial depreciation would immediately have a knock-on effect on the prices of imported commodities with dire economic and humanitarian consequences<sup>53</sup>.

External support has collapsed, foreign exchange reserves are nearly exhausted, and pressures on the budget have increased. As the global pandemic continues, and without additional external financing, economic output could continue to contract in Yemen, although IMF forecasts a slight recovery with a growth rate of 0.5 percent in 2021<sup>54</sup>. Continued financing of the fiscal deficit by the Central Bank and resultant exchange rate depreciation, together with rising international food and fuel prices, will contribute to further rapid inflation. Rising international prices will also increase pressure on the balance of payments and reserves. Significant additional external financing will be needed just to maintain a basic level of critical imports.

The World Bank estimates that recovery and reconstruction needs in the areas and sectors covered in the Dynamic Needs Assessment (DNA)<sup>55</sup> amount to US\$ 20 to US\$ 25 billion over five years. The DNA presents an urgent picture of the country's reconstruction needs:

- 39 percent of the housing stock in the assessed cities has been damaged; 1 percent beyond repair.
- 34 percent of education facilities are partially or fully damaged, leaving more than 10 percent of education facilities non-functional.
- More than 90 percent of the population has no or limited access to grid electricity.
- 29 percent of the intra-urban road network sustained physical damage<sup>56</sup> (road network damaged have contributed 18-20% increase in final prices of goods and services in Yemen).

There is much uncertainty looking ahead. A gradual recovery of global oil prices, along with increased national production and export capacity, would help ease the strain on Yemen's public finances in southern governorates and reduce its recourse to Central Bank financing.

Urgent progress—to address restrictions on access to imports of supplies and fuel through the port of Al Hudaydah—would improve domestic food prices and access, as well as the provision of public services and the operational environment for humanitarian organizations. Significant damage to vital public infrastructure has contributed to a disruption of basic services, while insecurity has delayed the rehabilitation of oil exports — which had been the largest source of foreign currency before the war — severely limiting government revenue and supply

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/overview>

<sup>54</sup> World Economic Outlook April 2021

<sup>55</sup> This third phase of the DNA covered the following sectors: Education, Food security, Governance and institution building, Health, Housing, Information and communications technology (ICT), Power, Social protection and jobs, Social resilience, Solid waste management (SWM), Transport, and Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

<sup>56</sup> UNDP CSN

of foreign exchange for essential imports. Delayed structural reforms and the slow pace of economic diversification efforts during the pre-war era have exacerbated the pressure on the budget as oil exports collapsed. The bifurcation of national capacity, including the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY), between the conflicting parties, and ad-hoc policy decisions by them further compound the economic crisis and humanitarian suffering from violence.

### **3.2.1 Employment/ Livelihoods**

Assessments in 2018 confirmed that all Yemeni population groups rank livelihoods among their top three priorities. Rapidly diminishing income opportunities, negative coping strategies, including recruitment and use, including of children, by parties to conflict, child labour or marrying off girls under 18, are becoming increasingly more prominent because of the economic hardship. The conflict thus drives economic deterioration, which again drives social collapse and at times even exacerbates conflict drivers<sup>57</sup>. Improving livelihoods can have multiple positive impacts for all Yemenis - on their ability to buy food, and other basic needs, on their mental health and a reduction in GBV, on the ability of their children to attend school. As it is now, Yemen's severe economic downturn directly negatively impacts livelihoods - the non-payment of teachers may further increase the number of children out of school, ultimately affecting skills development and the country's future potential of economic development.

Female labour market participation rates are also the lowest in the world, with over 90 percent of Yemeni women being inactive prior to the 2015 conflict. Even though female participation rates are generally low, participation rates in urban areas are triple those in rural areas, where women are predominantly employed in the public sector. Social norms and mobility restrictions constrain women's participation in the labour market, though more women have been entering the labour market out of necessity since the start of the conflict. Yemenis who immigrate to work in Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) compete with South Asian workers. Before the Saudization policy, Saudi Arabia hosted the largest number of Yemeni workers who, like other migrant workers, worked in low-skill occupations in sectors such as construction, retail, transport, and agriculture. An estimated 2 million Yemenis were in Saudi Arabia in 2018, though the Saudization policy was already forcing hundreds of thousands of expats back into Yemen.

The World Bank reports that approximately 25 percent of Yemeni businesses have closed, and over 51 percent have decreased in size and scaled-down operations. As a result, already-high unemployment levels have spiked, and significant private sector capital and skills have migrated overseas. Without additional support, the few remaining large businesses (mainly in construction and import) risk collapse. In addition, thousands of informal micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are struggling to operate – let alone create jobs.

The COVID-19 global downturn caused a sharp drop in remittances from Yemenis working abroad – the largest source of foreign currency in Yemen and a lifeline to millions of families. Yemenis who still have a source of income have seen their purchasing power decline. With about 90 percent of food and other essential commodities imported, the currency collapse has driven up prices leaving millions more people unable to meet their basic needs<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>58</sup> HRP 2020

More than 40 percent of Yemeni households are estimated to have lost their primary source of income - leaving female-headed households in a particularly precarious state. Employment in the agricultural sector (the primary provider of employment) has decreased by around 75 percent in rural and semi-urban areas<sup>59</sup>. Given the agriculture sector’s importance in producing food for consumption and commercialization, and generating incomes, it will continue to play an important role in household coping strategies and is expected to play a leading role in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction<sup>60</sup>.



Figure 13. Household engagement in agricultural activities. (Source: FSLA 2020)

Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of Yemeni livelihoods and the most important non-oil sector of the economy. However, despite the sector’s importance, agricultural productivity remains low, and the conflict has severely disrupted access to markets, transportation, and distribution.

The current period of severe economic disruption has witnessed agriculture’s share of GDP contract from 10.3 percent in 2010 to 4.02 percent in 2018.<sup>61</sup> The conflict has worsened production conditions, resulting in a shortage of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and fuel, damage to agricultural machinery, irrigation systems and storage facilities along with a deterioration of water, sanitation and electricity services, and a breakdown of logistical chains. As a result, the agricultural livelihoods of many have been hit hard, with cereal and livestock production levels falling drastically compared to pre-conflict levels.

Some contributing factors include an emigrating workforce, displacements, limited public resources allocated to the agricultural sector, ineffective research and extension services and a limited availability of, and access to, quality inputs and services<sup>62</sup>. To cope with the elevated production costs, farmers have shifted from irrigated to rainfed crops, which yield lower output and increasingly rely on family labour instead of on employing hired workers. The share of domestic wheat production in total food utilization in the last 10 years is between 5 and 10 percent, depending on the performance of the domestic harvest, and food imports are almost 25 percent lower than in the corresponding period in 2019, which is likely to impact food availability in the local markets<sup>63</sup>.

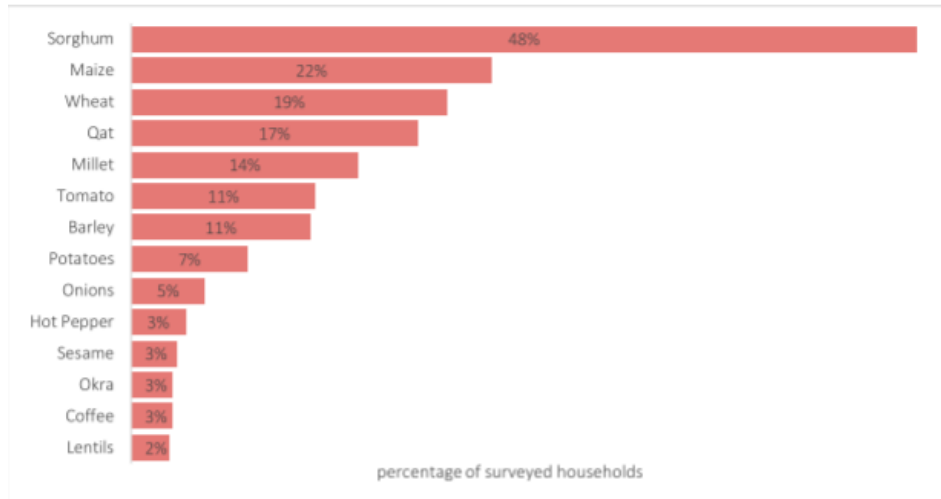
<sup>59</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>60</sup> [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Yemen/Employment\\_in\\_agriculture/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Yemen/Employment_in_agriculture/)

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Yemen/share\\_of\\_agriculture/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Yemen/share_of_agriculture/)

<sup>62</sup> FSLA 2020

<sup>63</sup> FSLA 2020



Source: FAO, 2020; FAO assessment results

Figure 14. Main crops produced by household. (Source: FSLA 2020)

Widespread flooding in most governorates in the 2020 agricultural season resulted in substantial damage to cultivated land and infrastructure, and significantly affected agricultural activities such as horticulture and livestock. FAO estimates that the flooding caused the destruction of USD 50 million worth of water infrastructure alone, with recovery and reconstruction needs in the short and medium term estimated at between USD 763 million and USD 932 million.<sup>64</sup>

Yemen is also one of the main breeding grounds for desert locust swarms, and the extensive rains created favorable conditions for desert locusts to reproduce, resulting in extensive damage to cultivated crops. Seasonal crops incurred heavy damages and losses in the 2020 agricultural season, the value of which has been estimated by the World Bank to be USD 222 million.

Despite a favourable weather forecast for crop production, 43 percent of the surveyed households expect that their production will be lower than the previous year. In addition, a large majority (66 percent) of the surveyed households experienced unusual difficulties in crop production, namely pest infestations and high prices of agricultural inputs, but only 8 percent of the surveyed households reported difficulties in accessing land due to COVID-19 restrictions. Over 40 percent of the surveyed households reported a decline in the number of livestock owned compared to last year. Livestock production contributes significantly to the livelihoods of rural Yemeni households through the use of animals and animal products as food and nutrition sources, and as a source of household income.

The major difficulties cited by livestock producers were animal disease and lack of feed and veterinary services. It is therefore essential that preventive and control measures for Transboundary Animal Diseases (TAD) are scaled up, and that vulnerable households can access sufficient animal feed with which to ensure the survival of their livestock and increase production.

<sup>64</sup> Yemen Dynamic Needs Assessment (DNA): Updated 2020 (World Bank).



### 3.2.2 Manufacturing Sector

As countries industrialize, they transition from producing low value-added products in industries with low technological intensity to the production of more complex products in the same and/or in more technologically advanced industries. Over time, this should lead to rising value added per capita and a rising share of medium- and high-tech (MHT) industries in total manufacturing value added, which, through R&D intensity, stimulate innovation and productivity across the whole manufacturing sector.

Looking at the indicators of the SDG-9 Industry targets (Figure 15), we find that Yemen performance is significantly less impressive. Manufacturing value added in Yemen has exhibited moderate growth since 2000. Although Yemen was able to increase its manufacturing value added from 8.3% in 2000 to 10.9% in 2017, it is still below the least-developed countries (11.7%) and is very far below Asian countries (22.9%) and China (29.1%).

Yemen manufacturing value added per capita dropped sharply from USD 144 in 2000 to USD 84 in 2017. This suggests that the country needs to focus on switching to higher value-adding activities, thereby increasing the impact of manufacturing on economic growth. The manufacturing employment in the country represents only 4.8%; it is substantially lower than that of the regional comparators: least-developed countries (7.4%), Asia (16%), and China (20.4%).



Figure 15. SDG-9 Industry performance in Yemen. MVA – MVA per capita – Employment.  
(Source: UNIDO Industrial Analytics Platform: <https://iap.unido.org/data/?p=YEM>)

On CO2 efficiency (Figure 16), the country performance is better than the region. Although the CO2 emissions from manufacturing per unit of value added in Yemen has stagnated since 2000 at 0.45 kg, the country still falls short of Asia (0,67 kg) and China (0,73 kg).

Growth enhancing structural change does not only mean the move from agriculture to manufacturing but can also occur within the manufacturing sector itself. It is approximated by the growing technology content of activities and a progressive shift from low to MHT industries and eventually leading to greater value addition.

Yemen’s share of manufacturing value added generated in MHT industries decreased sharply from 5.6% in 2000 to 2.1 % in 2017 (Figure 16), well below that of least-developed countries (8.8%), Asian countries (44.4%) and China (41.1%). Yemen top industries by value added are Food and Beverage (53.2%), Metal Products (11.4%), Glass,

Ceramic and Cement (10.3%); Apparel, Leather and Footwear (5.6%); and Rubber and Plastic (5.3%).<sup>65</sup> No MHT industry features in the country top industries. This supports the reading that additional efforts towards technological upgrading are needed.

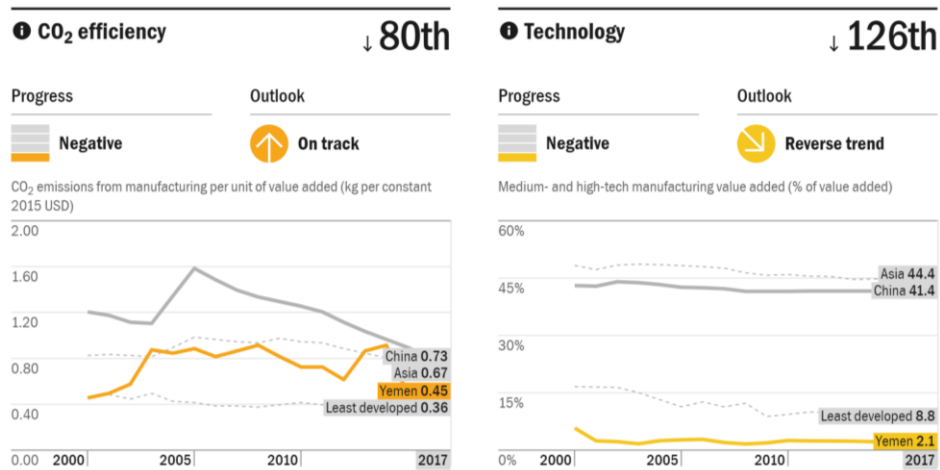


Figure 16. SDG-9 Industry performance in Yemen. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – MHT in MVA  
(Source: UNIDO Industrial Analytics Platform: <https://iap.unido.org/data/?p=YEM>)

### 3.2.3 Fisheries

Yemen has an extensive coastline and was once the second largest fish-producing country in the Arabian Peninsula, after Oman. Before the current crisis, the national fishery industry was producing more than 220 000 tonnes annually, with a significant proportion exported. Today, this figure has fallen to 131 308 tonnes and the average fish supply has fallen from 5.46 kg/capita/year to just 3.17 kg/capita/year, which is not only much lower than the global average of 20.5 kg/capita/year.

Half of fishing households reported a 50 percent decrease in fish production, citing constraints to fish production activities due to a lack of fishing materials, reduced market demand and high fuel prices. Considerable efforts have been made over the years to develop the fisheries subsector. Prior to the crisis, the fisheries subsector was Yemen’s second greatest revenue earner after oil with a 15% share of total exports. However, the ongoing crises has slowed its development, raised sustainability issues, and created several significant challenges.

These include limited capacity along all steps of the fisheries value chain, including low productivity, low quality of products, inadequate access to lucrative international markets, declining stocks, and limited private sector development of the subsector. Furthermore, the situation has worsened following two cyclones in November 2015, while the current conflict has heavily affected fishers due to restricted access to the sea, increased fuel prices, disruption of fish exports, destruction of fishing equipment and inadequate cold storage facilities.

The sector is an essential source of employment, income, and food security along the coastal zone. Approximately 83,400 small-scale enterprises, sustaining around 667,000 people, dominate the industry<sup>66</sup>. In total, nearly a million people are engaged in capturing, processing, and selling fish and shellfish. However, the escalation of conflict along

<sup>65</sup> <https://iap.unido.org/country/YEM>

<sup>66</sup> Impact Research, Fisheries value chain, July 2020. Commissioned by UNDP Yemen.

the coast has contributed to the disruption of fishing activities threatening the lives of 83,000 small-scale fisheries and their families.

For enhanced fisheries productivity, it is important to focus on improved fisheries interventions by supporting small-scale fisheries to strengthen the quantity and quality of fish reaching the final consumers, as well as on reducing waste and losses chains to improve fisheries value chains. Aquaculture development has also been identified as a priority, but it has yet to fulfil its potential.

### **3.2.4 Access & infrastructure damage**

It is assessed that around 29 percent of Yemen's Road network has now been either partially or fully destroyed due to the conflict. Roads are not maintained. Damaged infrastructure is vital for the distribution network, and the determination of food prices. Damage to the infrastructure to key routes such as Aden–Sana'a, Al Hudaydah–Sana'a, and Safer–Marib–AlBaydha–Dhahar has resulted in lengthy detours, which increases the price on key commodities such as wheat, flour, and steel. Importation costs of these goods and commodities are also high due to the imposed war insurance premium and delays for inspection in Jeddah as well as weak custom capacities and damages in the ports of Aden, Al Hudaydah and Mukallah.

Transportation of goods between major ports to Sana'a and highly concentrated population centers now takes more than five days compared to two before the crisis. The port in Al Hudaydah is vital for the importation of essential humanitarian assistance. Urgent progress—to address restrictions on access to imports of supplies and fuel through the port of Al Hudaydah—would improve domestic food prices and access, as well as the provision of public services and the operational environment for humanitarian organizations.

Significant damage to vital public infrastructure has contributed to a disruption of basic services, while insecurity has delayed the rehabilitation of oil exports — which had been the largest source of foreign currency before the war — severely limiting government revenue and supply of foreign exchange for essential imports.

The number of districts affected by active frontline hostilities has now risen to 51, an increase from 49 at the end of 2020. Nearly 80 percent of the people in need in Yemen are in “Hard-to-Reach” areas and humanitarian needs are most acute in these locations. Challenges to the delivery of humanitarian assistance are reported across the country but are most severe in northern Yemen. They include:

- Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities;
- Delays and denials of NGO project approvals;
- Interference and restrictions on project design and program approaches and strategies;
- Restrictions on monitoring and assessments;
- Restrictions on movements of humanitarian personnel and goods within and into Yemen through ports and on roads;
- Inefficient exchange rates for humanitarian actors that lead to a reduction in food supply.

The delivery of life-saving aid to civilian populations in Ansar Allah controlled areas has often been blocked or hindered by the Saudi coalition under the guise of strengthened vetting procedures and ensuring that the Ansar Allah coalition are not receiving arms from Iran. Human Rights Watch suggests that the naval and air blockade by the Saudi Coalition is in breach of international humanitarian law because the blockade poses disproportionate harm to the civilian population with limited military benefit. The diversion of fuel tankers, closure of critical ports,

and the de facto closure of Sana'a International Airport since August 2016 has limited the availability of fuel, medicines needed to power hospitals and pump much needed water.

There is also evidence of aid diversion in areas controlled by both Ansar Allah and the internationally recognized government, sometimes by military affiliates allied to the Saudi-Coalition. Aid, initially directed at vulnerable families at risk of famine, has also ended up in black markets such as Taiz and Aden, as well as in open markets in cities such as Sana'a in the north, where sellers don't even bother to hide the obvious reselling of stolen flour and cooking oil carrying the WFP logo. After increased pressure due to the harassment of aid workers, and restriction of humanitarian access, Ansar Allah established the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation (SCMCHA). The SCMCHA proclaimed it is responsible for the coordination of aid in Ansar Allah controlled areas.

The operating environment for aid workers is increasingly restrictive of assessments and freedom of movement. Humanitarian organizations operating in Ansar Allah-controlled areas report that the following incidents remain widespread: a) intimidation and arrests of humanitarian workers, b) illegal seizure of personal property of aid workers and their organizations, c) lack of respect for the commitment to independence by these organizations, and c) several bureaucratic impediments such as time-consuming meetings and negotiations, pending approval of sub-agreements, and attempts to pressure aid organizations to share beneficiary lists with Ansar Allah in order to manipulate aid delivery.

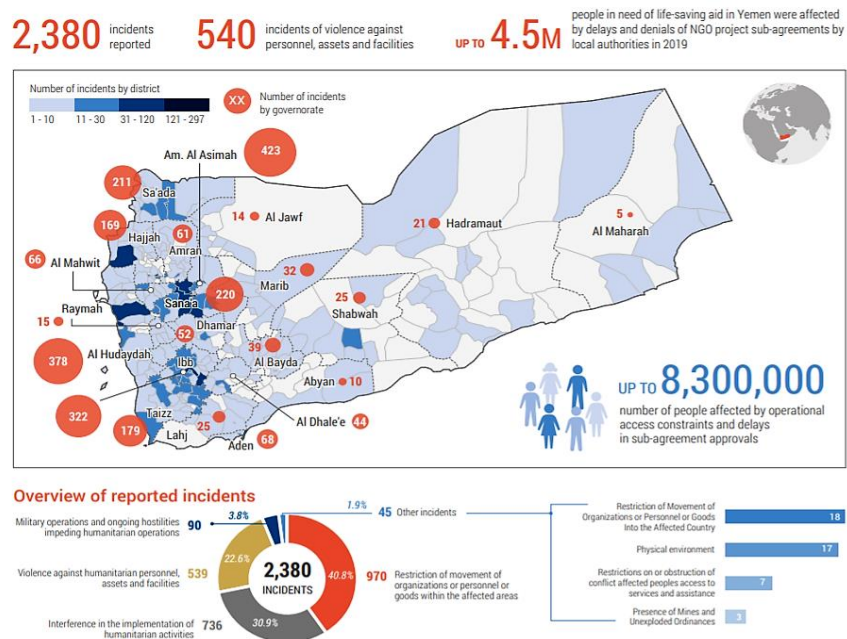


Figure 17. OCHA Humanitarian Access Snapshot 2019

Bureaucratic obstacles and restrictions on movement have seen a five-fold increase since 2018 and is particularly prevalent in the northern part of Yemen where UN and NGO partners were increasingly subjected to movement bans in the last six months of 2019. Obstructions on movement were also reported in the south, primarily stemming checkpoints across governorates due to the multitude of armed forces in charge of local security. Landmines have also made it difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach Tuhayta, Mawza'a districts and Al Hudaydah and other

communities on the western coast. However, it is important to note that there has been some progress in negotiating humanitarian access, which suggests continued advocacy is both important and worthwhile.

### **3.2.5 Resilience**

The provision of food and cash assistance is essential in the short term, yet unsustainable in the long term, and will lead to food-aid dependency and the erosion of the population's coping mechanisms. Therefore, the provision of such assistance should follow a twin-track approach that includes the provision of emergency livelihoods support to protect, strengthen, and restore rural and urban livelihoods while stimulating economic recovery. Integration of food and cash assistance with livelihood support activities is key to ensuring that household coping capacities are maintained and that households can generate sufficient income with which to improve their food security, thereby lessening humanitarian needs in the long-term.

Rainfed and irrigated crops, livestock and fisheries remain the main source of livelihoods for the bulk of Yemenis, especially for those living in rural and peri-urban areas. Therefore, these must be an integral part of the emergency relief and early recovery response to prevent Yemen's dire food security situation from worsening. Investing in agricultural livelihood interventions, reclaiming agricultural lands, and repairing highland terraces will help food insecure households to produce much-needed and life-saving food and reduce their dependency on food assistance and food imports.

Given that vulnerable farming and fishing households lack physical and economic access to inputs (because of insecurity, damaged infrastructure and greatly reduced purchasing power) and the disruption of markets in many areas, any emergency or recovery assistance needs to include support to supply and market chains.

The integration of longer-term capacity development, climate-smart agriculture (CSA), natural resource management (NRM) and value chain development into different types of interventions will reinforce the livelihood restoration and resilience of earlier short-term responses and lead to the sustainable recovery of Yemen's agriculture sector at all levels, such as household, community and institutional.

Increasing the resilience of vulnerable households to shocks can be achieved by improving access to livelihood opportunities and increasing household incomes by rehabilitating food security assets and infrastructure in areas with high levels of food insecurity. This will serve to stabilize local food production, improve food availability, and access, and increase the self-reliance and resilience of affected households. Similarly, the provision of emergency livelihood inputs will increase the availability of food and create employment opportunities, thereby enhancing the capacity of communities to sustain their productive assets.

Without longer-term scaling up, capacity development and climate change adaptation (CCA), FAO's current support to the relief and protection of rural and peri-urban livelihoods of farming, pastoralist and fisher families will continue to depend on prolonged food and cash assistance in 2018 and beyond. Furthermore, this will reduce the tendency among vulnerable farmers, women, and women-headed households, to depend on income generated from the socially and environmentally damaging, but financially lucrative, production of qat<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> FAO Plan of Action 2018-2020

In the medium to long term – and particularly if food prices continue to rise – conversion from qat to food will be more attractive to farmers. Despite its sizeable contribution to the local economy, Yemen’s qat production has had disastrous environmental effects by depleting the limited groundwater reserves due to the conversion of large agricultural areas for qat cultivation. Programming should therefore focus on encouraging conversion from qat production to food to increase local food production and help respond to rising food prices and to preserve water levels.

Supporting behavioural change programmes and possibly disincentives such as withdrawal of diesel or water subsidies is needed. In the longer term, improving agricultural productivity requires improved productivity and environmental management, and enhanced working conditions. To preserve and improve rural livelihood resilience, focus should be on: (a) a more integrated and graduated approach where emergency and short-term employment (e.g., cash-for-work) is linked to social service access (“cash-plus” interventions); (b) access to microfinance institutions; (c) access to skills training; and, (d) support for micro-businesses development to improve productivity and create decent work<sup>68</sup>.

Inclusion of groups that are commonly marginalized and have limited access to livelihoods and services, such as IDPs, women, persons with disabilities, and/or chronic illnesses, and others, should be prioritized. It is important also to assess factors contributing to instability and the loss of coping capacities in different contexts, with the aim of identifying specific measures needed to build resilience (improvement of local services, government capacity, local conflict resolution capacity, etc.)

Addressing the climate crisis is another key element of any path to 2030 for Yemen that prioritizes resilience. Environmental challenges pose significant risks to agriculture production. The prevailing water stress in Yemen because of the climate crisis is affecting water management, food production and food security in a cascading manner. Natural resource management integrated with surface and groundwater resource management for multiple use (domestic and productive) is crucial and needs to be prioritized to enhance food production and food security in Yemen.

It is important to restore and protect agricultural livelihoods by distributing critical agri-inputs to enable affected households to continue domestic food production and to generate income. Resilience-building lies at the heart of all emergency activities, and interventions that are designed to respond to immediate needs as well as to increase the ability of affected households to anticipate, absorb, withstand, and recover from yet further shocks to household food security and nutrition.

### 3.3 Environment & Climate Change Analysis

The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index<sup>30</sup> ranks Yemen among the countries least prepared for climate shocks and among the most vulnerable to the climate crisis. Yemen’s vulnerability came to the forefront during the April to August 2020 period, when heavy rains and flooding devastated communities – causing deaths and injuries, destroying infrastructure and livelihoods, and increasing the spread of deadly diseases. Tens of thousands of families – many already displaced – were affected. Other natural hazards also pose a threat, including desert locust infestations, projected to cause damage and loss worth US\$ 222 million.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> SEF 2020

This has led to escalating conflict with host communities, particularly in urban areas, because of pressure on limited services and resources<sup>69</sup>, now exacerbated by COVID-19. A study by Sana'a University researchers found that 70 to 80 percent of all rural conflict in Yemen is related to water – including tribal, sectarian, and political conflicts<sup>35</sup>. Yemen's rapid population growth (averaging 2.7 percent a year) and combined with a lack of awareness regarding the importance of water conservation in most of the population – contributes to a higher demand for water. Qat production, Yemen's number one crop, consumes more than 40 percent of the country's water supply.

In more rural areas, such as Shabwa and Hadramawt, these conflicts often derive from tribal clashes over territory with valuable resources (oil, water). In urban spaces, such as Aden and Taiz, these conflicts tend to be neighbourhood disputes over contested property lines. For decades, land disputes have been a regular source of local conflict in Yemen, particularly in the south. Dating back to 1967, property seizures and redistributions became so commonplace in Aden and elsewhere that multiple "legitimate" claims of ownership of property often developed. In 2013, President Hadi empaneled a committee of judges to solve land related disputes as a confidence-building measure on the eve of the National Dialogue Conference. But these efforts proved largely unsuccessful, in part because competing claims were difficult to adjudicate, and the Yemeni government lacked the financial means to provide restitution to those whose claims were unsuccessful<sup>70</sup>.

Temperatures in Yemen may increase by up to 3.3<sup>o</sup> Celsius by 2060 and by 5.1<sup>o</sup> Celsius by the end of the century. With temperatures rising faster than the global average, models predict more prolonged droughts and heatwaves. Warming will be more severe in the interior regions with a decrease in the average rainfall at a rate of 1.2mm per month (a 9 percent decrease), particularly in the Highlands. The reduction in average rainfall comes with a higher precipitation variability that is likely to reduce food security due to droughts and floods. Most of Yemen's water comes from rain, and Yemenis have historically exploited groundwater by digging wells. The exploitation of all surface and groundwater resources is beyond the level of recharge. Groundwater abstraction in the Sana'a basin is four times higher than its recharge. At this abstraction rate, Sana'a may deplete its water supply in just a few years.

Vulnerability to climate change and pest outbreaks are exacerbating this already dire situation in Yemen, creating a crisis within a crisis. In recent years, Yemen's rainfall patterns have shown increasing extremes – attributed to climate change and variability. The country suffers from "absolute" water scarcity, with an internal renewable water resources rate of less than 100 m<sup>3</sup> per inhabitant per year. Major cities are running out of water and a large proportion of the population does not have access to safe drinking water (with serious implications for the spread of human and animal diseases, in particular cholera).

Frequent droughts and flash floods have affected crop production, livelihoods and income generation for a significant percentage of the population. Many households also face the threat of crop failure due to the effects of pests and diseases, sandstorms and land degradation – all of which further threaten their food security and nutrition. It is anticipated that groundwater reserves are likely to be mostly depleted within 20-30 years, irrespective of climate change, reducing agricultural output by up to 40 percent.

While droughts persist, seasonal flooding creates additional, compounding problems. Torrential rains in mid-April 2020 caused floods in the north of the country, particularly in the Marib and Sana'a governorates. In late April,

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<sup>69</sup> UN Habitat 2020

<sup>70</sup> RAND 2021

intense rains also caused flooding in the southern part of the country (Hadramaut, Shabwah, Aden and Lahj), which had already been affected by flooding at the end of March 2020. The cities of Sana'a and Aden were also exceptionally hard hit by the April floods. These series of floods coincided with the harvesting of wheat in the Central Highlands and planting of sorghum in the Southern Uplands and Central Highlands. Thus, planting activities were delayed, while standing crops awaiting harvest were damaged. Damage to agricultural infrastructure and livestock were also reported. In turn, the abundant precipitation enabled the breeding of desert locusts, particularly in the interior part of the country, and the country's capacity to survey and control pests is minimal due to a lack of the required equipment.

The agriculture sector, responsible for 93 percent of water consumption, could make an essential contribution to rural development but remains constrained by water scarcity. Qat production, Yemen's number one crop, consumes more than 40 percent of the country's water supply. Reducing qat consumption through consistent awareness-raising campaigns can be a means to boost the country's food security – especially if accompanied by the promotion of alternative crops that can provide comparable sources of income. Besides qat consumption, there are other explanations for Yemen's water scarcity. Underpinning the issue is the lack of state capacity and regulation. Although traditional social institutions exist to regulate the water rights for farmers and herdsmen, they are ill-equipped to monitor and regulate the emerging borewells that allow much faster withdrawal rates.

The introduction of diesel-operated pumps<sup>71</sup> and deep-well drilling technology in the twentieth century further exacerbated the problem. The more privileged Yemenis could access groundwater at far greater depths in the North to irrigate high-value fruit crops. However, most smallholders were impoverished, as their shallow wells dried up and they lost their own agricultural and pastoral potential. A further consequence of limited state capacity and regulation is poor upstream watershed management, as illustrated by the dire state of Yemen's terraces due to lack of maintenance – impeding upstream watershed replenishment and reduced downstream groundwater availability. Changing rainfall patterns, with increasingly violent downpours, are reducing replenishment as the loss of topsoil prevents the absorption of flows.

Yemen's rapid population growth (averaging 2.7 percent a year) and combined with a lack of awareness regarding the importance of water conservation in most of the population – contributes to a higher demand for water.

### **3.3.1 FSO SAFER**

The FSO SAFER is a floating oil storage and off-loading vessel, that is moored approximately 6 nautical miles off the coast of Yemen adjacent to the port city of Hudaydah. This vessel was constructed in 1976 as an oil tanker and was converted in 1987 to be a floating storage facility. The vessel is 376 meters in length and contains approximately 1.14 million barrels of light crude oil. Since March 2015, the FSO SAFER has been under the control of Ansar Allah and has not been operational. This has resulted in significant deterioration in its structural integrity increasing fears of an oil spill or explosion, which would devastate the Yemen coast, destroy livelihoods, force a closure of the port, disrupt vital shipping through the Bab al Mandab Strait and through the Red Sea, and affect Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia.

Both the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah authorities approached the United Nations to provide support in resolving the FSO SAFER issue in early 2018. Since then, several UN entities have been working to find a solution to

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<sup>71</sup> In more recent times, solar powered pumps have also contributed to the problem.



the FSO SAFER situation and multiple Member States, Non-Governmental Organizations, commercial companies, and private entities have also been engaged. However, the escalation of military hostilities on the Yemeni west coast throughout most of 2018 made safe access to the tanker impossible. Further, international access to the FSO SAFER to assess its condition has thus far been prevented by Ansar Allah.

In October 2021, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen was requested to provide UN system-wide leadership and coordinate all efforts to mitigate the threats posed by the FSO SAFER. It was recognised that the substantial delays, had only increased the very real possibility that the vessel may sink, suffer an oil leak, or explode.

Considering the SAFER is holding cargo four times larger than the Exxon Valdez<sup>72</sup>, the environmental ramifications of a leak or explosion would be catastrophic. The precise impact of a disaster would depend on seasonal variations in weather and sea and wind conditions, but ACAPS found that if the SAFER’s oil leaked between April and June, it would affect 31,500 fishermen and 235,000 workers in fishing-related industries and would likely shut down the vital port of Al Hudaydah, for up to three months. Importantly, it would likely be the biggest man-made oil-related disaster ever recorded. Additionally, while the actual clean-up costs cannot be determined the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill (260,000 barrels) affected more than 2,000 kilometers of coast and cost 2.5 billion USD. The 2010 Deepwater Horizon leak (approximately 4 million barrels of oil) costing approximately 15 billion USD (not including economic damages and litigation).

For the SEPOC employees on the ship, there’s neither aid nor safety. The onboard contingent has been whittled down from a peak of 100 when the ship was operational to a skeleton crew of seven or eight. They are monitored around the clock by Ansar Allah security forces. Occasionally, a chartered fishing boat visits the SAFER, bringing food, spare parts, and drums of diesel for the generator. Approximately once a month, the crew gets shore leave and is replaced by a new staff rotation. All confirm that the disaster is imminent<sup>73</sup>.

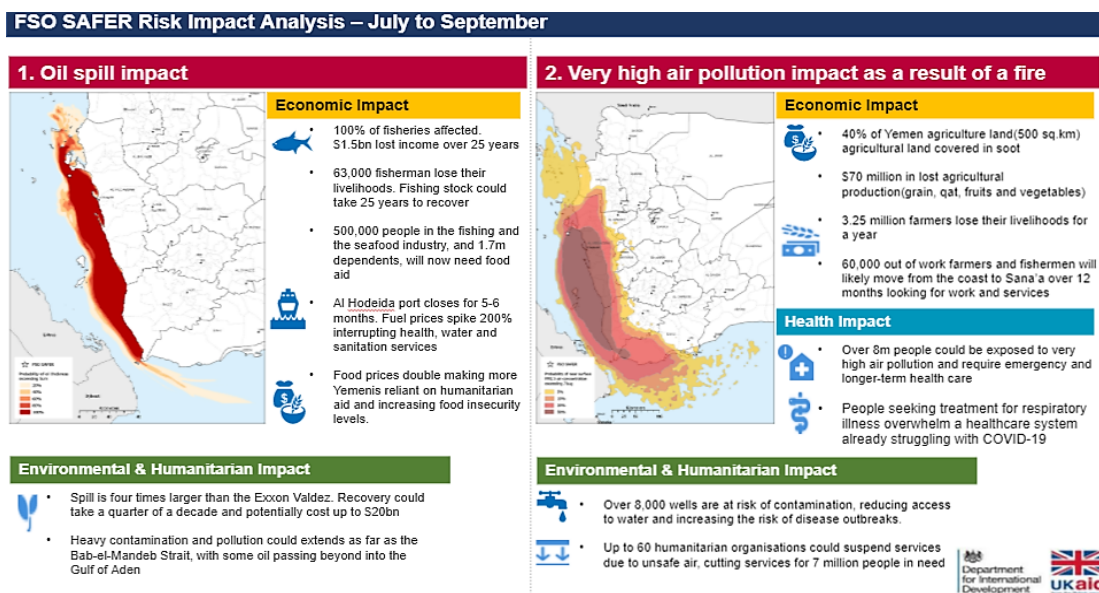


Figure 18. FSO SAFER Risk Analysis Snapshot. (Source: DIFD, UKAID)

<sup>72</sup> The Exxon Valdez leaked oil into Prince William Sound in 1989 causing massive environmental damage

<sup>73</sup> <https://time.com/6048436/fso-safer-yemen-oil-tanker-disaster/>

### 3.4 Social & Multidimensional Risk Analysis

#### 3.4.1 Hunger, Food Security & Malnutrition

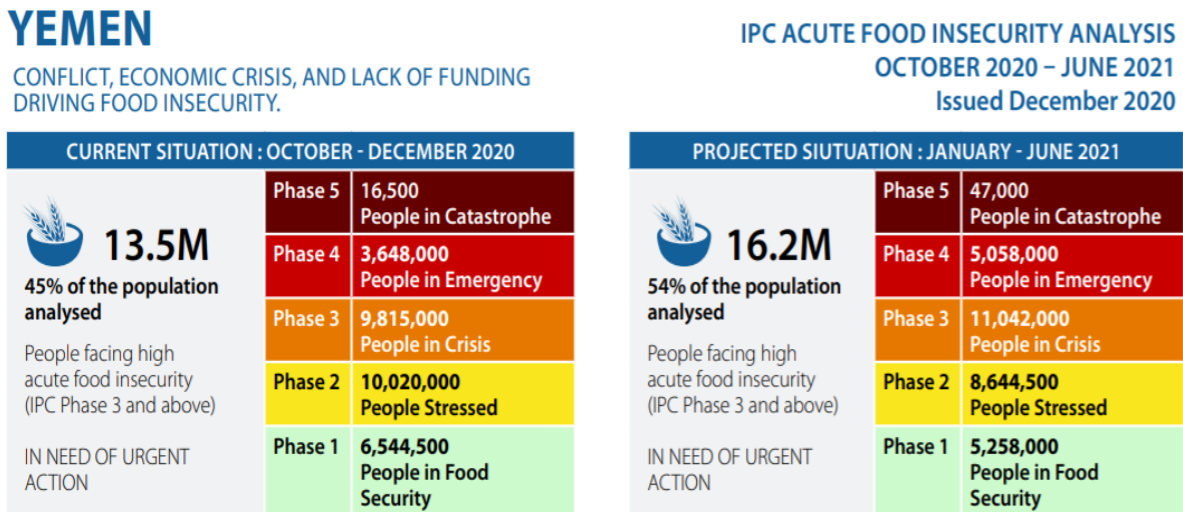


Figure 19. Food insecurity snapshot (Source: Yemen IPC 2020)

Famine is looming in Yemen and malnutrition rates are at a record high. As the crisis continues, more than half of the population in Yemen is hungry. Cases of acute malnutrition among children under five are at the highest ever recorded. In some areas, one child in four is acutely malnourished. 2.3 million children under 5 suffer from acute malnutrition, including 400,000 from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). In addition, over 1.2 pregnant and lactating women are also facing acute malnutrition.

Food insecurity is most severe in areas of active conflict or surrounding areas where humanitarian access is limited by the security situation. According to FAO 2020 COVID-19 Monitoring Report, food insecurity as measured through the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module concluded that about 53.6 percent of the surveyed households find themselves in a state of moderate food insecurity or worse<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3247en>

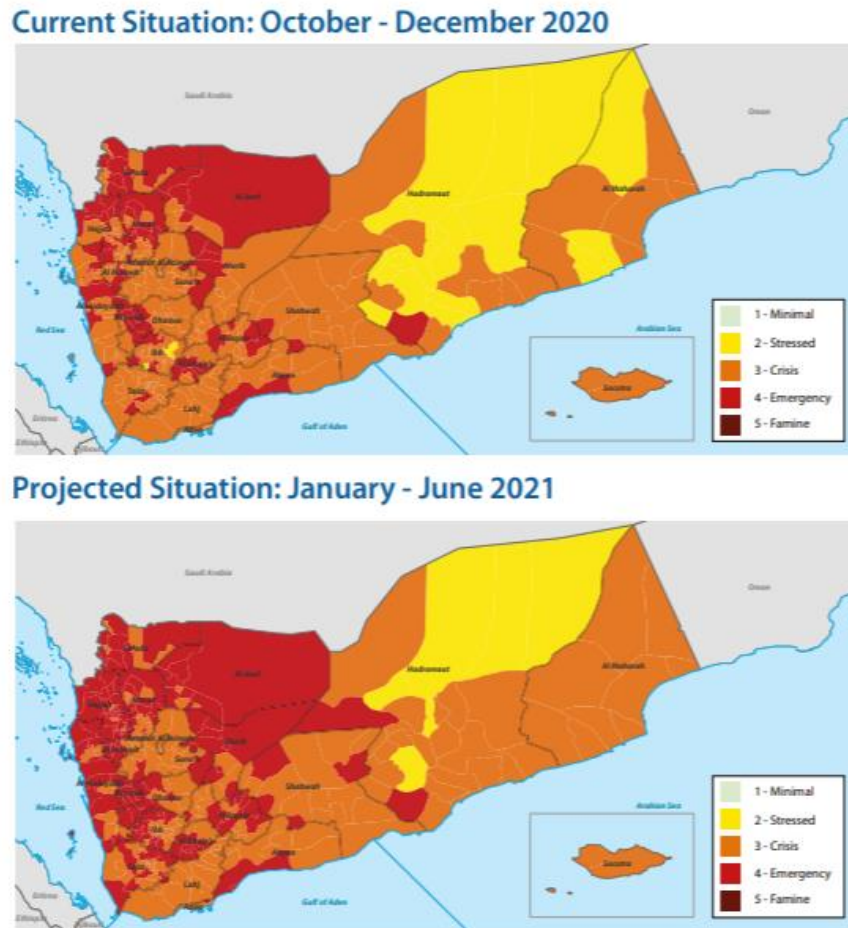


Figure 20. Worsening food insecurity map (Source: Yemen IPC 2020)

Yemen has long been classified as a low-income, food-deficit country that produces merely 10 percent of its food need. People of Yemen are suffering from both chronic and acute deprivation and are exhausting means of both livelihood and consumption coping strategies, which renders them more vulnerable to additional shocks. Such shocks include the escalation of the conflict, income losses incurred due to COVID-19 and the overall economic deterioration in the country, fuel crisis, reduction of humanitarian assistance, and a series of natural disasters including a locust plague and flash floods. The aforementioned elements, intertwined, had an amplified impact on households which in a less fragile setting could have had a more moderate impact<sup>75</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, food insecurity is more severe in areas with active fighting and bordering areas with limited access; it particularly affects IDPs and marginalized groups such as landless labourers and Muhamasheen. Food insecurity has also increased in areas where people traditionally survive on low and irregular sources of income and suffer poor access to public services, a situation exacerbated by the conflict.

Food insecurity as measured through the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module concluded that about 53.6 percent of the surveyed households find themselves in a state of moderate food insecurity or worse. In turn, 19 percent of households surveyed attributed their food insecurity experiences mainly to COVID-19 and its impacts on

<sup>75</sup> IPC 2020

their livelihoods. Based on a combination of livelihood and food security indicators, the top four hardest hit household categories were:

- Households whose primary source of income comes from agricultural wage labour;
- Households relying on non-agricultural wage labour;
- Households deriving their main income from humanitarian and other forms of assistance; and
- Households producing and selling livestock products<sup>76</sup>.

Less than 1 percent of agricultural landholders in Yemen are female. However, women have a major role in agriculture, providing 60 percent of labour in crop farming, 90 percent in livestock rearing and 10 percent of wage labour. Women-headed households are more at risk of food insecurity due to their limited work opportunities, lower wages, and reduced access to productive resources, services and rural institutions. Moreover, women are generally excluded from economic transactions in the local markets. When food is scarce, women are the first family members to eat less as a coping mechanism, even though they continue to do hard labour (e.g., working in the fields), and bear children. Agricultural extension and other services, including training opportunities, are not provided or limited for rural women and related staff<sup>77</sup>.

Despite strained distribution channels, food availability is not a problem in Yemen. The problem is that many Yemenis simply cannot afford to buy the food available in the country's markets. The only solution is that food prices must come down, and income and purchasing power must go up. Food security in Yemen is a structural and development issue that requires addressing a series of underlying factors that humanitarian assistance will not solve.

ACAPS<sup>78</sup> emphasises that “many of the current food supply chain challenges and constraints in Yemen stem from structural dynamics that date back decades.” Throughout the 1990s, Yemen accelerated its transition to a highly import-dependent economy – especially for basic foodstuffs – as oil export revenues, combined with large remittance flows from Yemeni workers abroad, were used to support a strong domestic currency. Local food production could not remain competitive in the face of cheap imports. Agriculture shifted towards the production of local cash crops geared for the domestic market, such as qat<sup>79</sup>. Structural reforms designed to liberalise the economy during the last 20 years – and make it more open and competitive – ultimately increased the market dominance of a small number of businesses closely tied to the ruling political class.

Yemen's food supply chain has continued to function through six years of conflict, in large part because food importers on all sides have adopted dynamic operational methods in a complex and politicised environment. But the continued functioning has come at a high cost. Food prices have doubled between 2015 and 2019 and continue to rise. Without sustained and informed external support, the gap between the cost of food and what Yemenis can afford will continue to grow.

High import taxes, double taxation of commodities, movement restrictions and insecurity disrupting market supplies, lack of credit for traders, and shortages and high prices of fuel that increase transport/storage costs all

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<sup>76</sup> FSLA 2020

<sup>77</sup> FAO Plan of Action 2018-2020

<sup>78</sup> Yemen food supply chain, Mercy Corps and ACAPS Analysis Hub – Thematic Report, 16 December 2020

<sup>79</sup> A water intensive crop that has caused a significant lowering of the water table, making the arable land unsuitable for other crops.

pushed the cost of food beyond the reach of many families. Access disruptions, such as port closures and road blockages due to damage or restriction of access, disrupt supply lines, reduce the purchasing power of suppliers, affect the price of goods, and contribute to increase the risk of famine.

The northern areas of Yemen are likely to experience the highest level of food insecurity, with some households likely to reach Phase 5 on the IPC scale. While different governorates experience food insecurity in varying degrees, in certain areas such as Taiz, Al Hudaydah and Hajjah there are at alarming levels of food insecurity. The insecure food situation is likely to have worsened further in 2020 due to the conflict and deteriorating macroeconomic conditions, which deter food imports.

Because the Yemeni population is highly dependent on imports to meet basic food needs, import restrictions and increased prices of commodities are among the main drivers for the high levels of food insecurity. Governorates including Al Hudaydah and Sa'ada that experienced intensified conflict in 2018 continue to suffer the most from soaring prices of basic commodities.

The economic hardship is dispersed differently across the Yemeni governorates. Due to the agricultural nature of the Ibb area, fewer people were on government payrolls and the lack of governmental salaries has thus not impacted the governorate as it has in Aden. Nonetheless, as in Aden, communities have suffered just as much from price hikes, expensive housing rents, diminishing incomes, and lack of job opportunities. According to a Saferworld report from 2017, IDP communities in Ibb were more acutely affected by these threats, having lost their jobs and homes leaving them with little choice but to find reasonable accommodation in areas where rental prices have soared due to demand. Al Hudaydah also had significant rates of pre-crisis poverty (58.1 percent in 2014), which means that its residents had fewer resources to help absorb economic shocks.

Damaged infrastructure is vital for the distribution network, and the determination of food prices. Damages to the infrastructure and key routes such as Aden–Sana'a, Al Hudaydah–Sana'a, and Safer–Marib–AlBaydha–Dhamar have resulted in lengthy detours, which increases the price on key commodities such as wheat, flour and steel. Transportation of goods between major ports to Sana'a and highly concentrated population centers now takes more than five days compared to two before the crisis. Food insecurity is most severe in areas with active fighting and particularly affects IDPs, their host families, marginalized groups, and landless wage labourers. Armed conflict remains the main driver of food insecurity in the country, curtailing food access, depleting savings and assets, and depressing employment levels and income.

Yemen used to have significant local agricultural production. However, this is no longer the case, and Yemen relies heavily on the importation of most commodities, including 90 percent of its food. Food prices surged across all of Yemen from 2018 to 2020. While the prices of locally produced food remained stable, the prices of imported food have increased. Therefore, supply chain disruptions have had a devastating impact on the availability of goods including food.

According to a 2017 World Bank report, contemporary famine in Yemen is thus, unlike traditional situations of food insecurity, driven by high inflation resulting from conflict rather than the lack of food availability. Before the conflict, Yemen depended almost entirely on imports to fulfil local market demand for staple food commodities. Food importers have consistently flagged the increasing cost and scarcity of foreign currency as a top constraint in recent

years. Importers have faced increasing costs for transportation and shipping because of conflict, inspection delays, and delays in the clearance of goods and commodities, which have in turn increased the retail prices of food items. Limited job opportunities, decreased wages, and lack of payment of public salaries and pensions have undermined people's ability to purchase (increasingly expensive) food and other essential goods. This, conversely, has weakened the ability of merchants to buy supplies and keep commercial imports at previous levels thus depleting stocks and driving up prices further. COVID-19 has furthermore resulted in the stockpiling of food, medicine, hygiene products and further restrictions on movements globally. This will likely result in further price hikes and will exacerbate Yemen's already dire food security situation

### 3.4.2 Health

Most of the Yemeni population have limited access to health services because of the insecurity in many areas, poor access, roadblocks, non-functionality of existing health facilities, and harsh socio-economic conditions. The escalation of conflict on multiple frontlines and recurrent natural disasters are leading to the diversion of established life-saving support, to meet the emerging needs of the people impacted by these situations.

According to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview people in need of health assistance this year will reach 20.1 million people with 11.6 million in acute need. The shortage in funding during 2020 led to further deterioration of the current health system. Of the 304.6 million USD needed for the health sector in 2020, only 27.4 percent was funded. Unless more funding is received during 2021, the health situation will continue to deteriorate, leading to an unimaginable impact on mortality and morbidity<sup>80</sup> putting the vulnerable Yemeni population at higher risk of death.

There remains tremendous geographical variation in severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment coverage, with an estimated one-fifth of Yemen's 300 districts not achieving high coverage for SAM treatment. Several bottlenecks and gaps have been identified ( local insecurity, funding shortfalls, import restrictions on supplies, limited numbers of community health volunteers and other cadres in some areas, unpaid health worker salaries). Despite the aforementioned support to the health sector, the country has been plagued by the world's worst food crisis, as well as the world's worst cholera outbreak<sup>81</sup>.

The country's total fertility rate (TFR) and under-five mortality rate (U5MR) have declined substantially since 2000. The U5MR fell from 95 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 58 per 1,000 live births in 2019<sup>82</sup>. Fertility has fallen substantially since 2000, when the national TFR hovered around six children per woman, on average. However, according to the 2013 Yemen Demographic Health Survey, Yemen's TFR is still high (4.4 nationally, 5.1 in rural areas and 3.2 in urban areas). Estimated in 2017 at 164 deaths per 100,000 live births, the maternal mortality ratio in Yemen remains the highest in the Arab region. Thus, with declining but consistently high mortality and fertility rates, the country is still in the midst of a demographic transition. The country is not yet at a stage when it can reap a demographic dividend<sup>83</sup>. Furthermore, there is a tendency to restrict women's access to contraceptives.

The cumulative impact of years of conflict and persistent humanitarian needs have also taken a heavy toll on the mental health of Yemenis, particularly its women and girls. An estimated 1 in 5 people suffer from mental health disorders, yet mental healthcare remains scarce in Yemen. Mental illness is highly stigmatized, and the proportion

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<sup>80</sup> WHO February 2021 bulletin

<sup>81</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>82</sup> [www.childmortality.org](http://www.childmortality.org)

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

of psychiatrists per population is insufficient<sup>84</sup>. Accumulative and prolonged stress that hasn't led to mental illness, can be addressed through community-based psychosocial support can be useful.

There is a shortage of health workers in Yemen. The majority of health workers migrated due to insecurity, face access challenges, lack of supplies and a lack of salaries; many are largely dependent on incentives offered by humanitarian actors to sustain the remaining services offered in these facilities<sup>85</sup>. A network of 18,000 community volunteers and religious leaders who conduct community-based surveillance, reporting of suspected cases of COVID-19 for further investigation, and support contact tracing, as well as working within their communities to increase awareness of public health issues.

While only 51 percent of the total health facilities are fully functioning, more than 70 percent of those do not have regular supplies of essential medicines. The severe shortage in medicines is a result of obstacles such as difficulties in importing medicines, price increases and lack of operational funds. Support to health technologies that facilitate diagnosis and guide treatment protocols such as public health laboratories, blood transfusion centers, imaging and radiodiagnosis equipment continues to be limited despite huge efforts and investments made by UN organizations and the donor community<sup>86</sup>.

Factors such as the limited availability of funding for public hospitals, lack of a national health insurance scheme and inflation, have led many Yemenis to be unable to afford the out-of-pocket costs of healthcare. Where private sector health services exist, they remain out of reach for millions of vulnerable people due to high prices.

In 2020, 25 incidents of attacks on health care were recorded (compared to 23 in 2019) on the Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA), resulting in 7 deaths and 5 injuries of health care workers and patients. The majority of the incidents (13) involved the use of heavy weapons. Ensuring access to health services is the cornerstone of a successful health response yet attacks on health care have continuously interfered with the availability and delivery of essential health services. Such attacks represent both a violation of International Humanitarian Law and a violation of human rights.

According to an IOM survey, the main reason health facilities were inaccessible was the high costs of health services (33percent), the lack of transportation (17percent), and the high costs of transportation (14percent). In addition to sometimes long travel times and problems relating to transportation which pose an obstacle in rural areas, the high cost of treatment is the main obstacle in urban areas. Three quarters of the population of the governorates under study do not believe that health services provided are sufficient for their household<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>84</sup> UNFPA Humanitarian Response 2021

<sup>85</sup> WHO February 2021 bulletin

<sup>86</sup> Yemen HDPN Health Profile 2020

<sup>87</sup> Viewing the local level: assessment of living conditions, security, social cohesion, and service provision. IOM 2020.

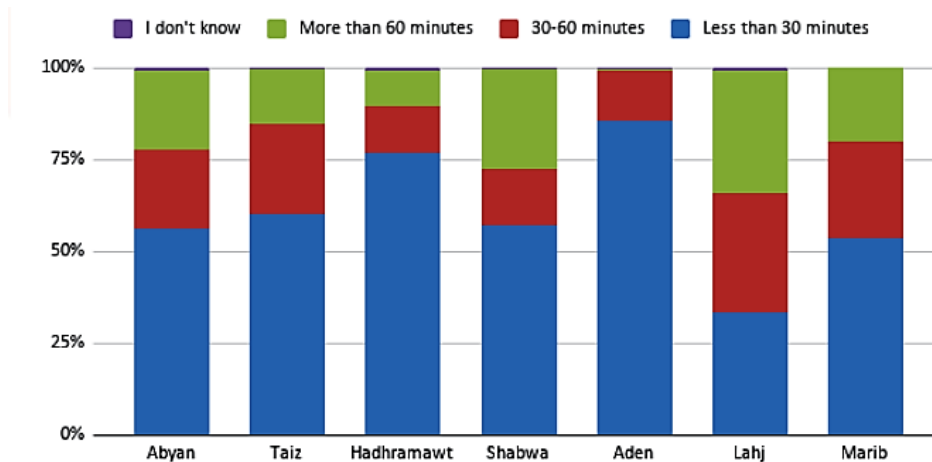


Figure 21. Travel time to medical facilities. (Source: IOM 2020)

### Non-Communicable Diseases

WHO Yemen country office estimates that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are responsible for 57percent of all deaths of the Yemeni population, yet there is no developed multisectoral national strategy to address the gap in provision of NCD treatments. People with chronic illnesses including hypertension, diabetes, cancer and mental health conditions are amongst the most vulnerable group of Yemeni population as they require regular access to regular treatment. Patients and their families struggle to access such treatment, while they are striving to secure basic needs such as food, water, and fuel among other essential needs. The interrupted treatment for such groups has a direct effect on the overall health status of the patient and the deterioration of their medical conditions that will lead to unavoidable complications.

According to HNO 2021, people suffering from chronic and NCDs face a lack of medicines due to import restrictions resulting from access restriction and bureaucratic delays, rising prices and a growing gap between supply and demand. People with mental health issues, survivors of GBV with mental health and psychosocial challenges, and persons with disabilities (physical or mental) are also among the vulnerable. WHO estimates that more than 7 million individuals need mental health treatment with no adequate national strategy to address that gap<sup>88</sup>.

### Cholera & Other Diseases

The cholera outbreak in Yemen has previously been described as the ‘world’s worst cholera outbreak in the midst of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis’<sup>89</sup>. In October 2016, Yemen experienced its first wave, soon followed in May 2017 with a second wave, and subsequent declaration of a national emergency on 14 May<sup>90</sup>. From 28 September 2016 to 12 March 2018, there were 1,103,683 suspected cholera cases with 2,385 reported deaths<sup>91</sup>. Chronic water scarcity, ever increasing water prices, and damaged water supply infrastructure, combined with ‘crippled public health and WASH systems contributed to the unprecedented scale of the 2017 cholera outbreak’<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> WHO/Lancet 2019

<sup>89</sup> WHO (2017) Statement by UNICEF Executive Director, Anthony Lake, WFP Executive Director, David Beasley and WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, following their joint visit to Yemen 2017 [Available from: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/detail/26-07-2017-statement-byunicef-executive-director-anthony-lake-wfp-executive-director-david-beasleyand-who-director-general-dr-tedros-adhanom-ghebreyesus-following-theirjoint-visit-to-yemen>. Last Accessed 14 June 2021]

<sup>90</sup> OCHA (2018) Humanitarian Response Plan: January-December 2018, OCHA.

<sup>91</sup> Camacho, etal (2018) ‘Cholera Epidemic in Yemen, 2016-2018: An Analysis of Surveillance Data’, Lancet Global Health 6: e680-690.

<sup>92</sup> OCHA (2018) Humanitarian Response Plan: January-December 2018, OCHA.



Currently the number of cases of cholera appear to be declining. Between 1 January – 23 March 2021, there were 13,013 AWD/cholera suspected cases and two associated deaths reported, with a 0.02 percent confirmed fatality rate (CFR)<sup>93</sup>. This is a notable decrease compared with the same time period of 2020 where there were 31,913 suspected cases and six associated deaths with a 0.02 percent CFR<sup>94</sup>.

Cholera has not been the only disease to affect Yemen during the conflict. In December 2017, Yemen suffered from a diphtheria outbreak which affected 18 of 22 governorates. In May 2020 Aden suffered from a combination of diseases, including pneumonic plague, dengue fever, malaria and COVID-19, killing nearly one thousand civilians<sup>95</sup>.

### COVID-19

The actual number of COVID-19 cases in Yemen is unknown with limited information coming from Ansar Allah controlled areas<sup>96</sup>. As of 19 July 2021, a total of 6,985 cases, including 1,369 deaths, have been declared in the country since the onset of the epidemic in Yemen in 2020. However, a seroprevalence study conducted in Aden (December 2020 to January 2021) showed a seropositivity rate of 27.4 percent, which is indicative of the underreporting of the official figures.

The CFR (case fatality rate) stood at 19.7 percent - the highest in the Middle East. Some 382 suspected cases were from health workers, or 4.78 percent of the total cases<sup>97</sup>. Future case surges are expected due to low vaccination coverage, lack of public health measures in the country, and new variants. The fact that COVID-19 has not been taken seriously is extremely worrisome in the North. In the South, COVID-19 response is more operational; however, prevention, which is most critical in the context of Yemen, must be scaled up, beginning with appropriate risk communication and public health measures.

As of mid-July, some 298,161 Yemenis in the Government of Yemen areas received the first dose on COVID-19 vaccine (AstraZeneca - AZ), including 21,059 Health Care Workers. A total of 13,322 people received a second dose of AZ, including 3,742 health care workers. In the north, some 10,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been distributed to vaccinate frontline health workers. No coverage information has been shared by the MoH to date.

The country's health sector is largely unprepared to deal with COVID-19 demands. A lack of medical staff personal protective equipment left them especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19, resulting in turning patients away. Case management and isolation capacity regarding training, equipment, and medical supplies are poor. Oxygen cylinders, hospital beds dedicated to COVID-19, and ventilators are extremely limited and – while supplies have been increasing with WHO support – global COVID-19 supply shortages and limited logistic capacity are constraining. There are six labs with COVID-19 testing capacity – already overwhelmed by other outbreaks such as cholera – and two equipped isolation and treatment centres that can cater to 40 patients.

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<sup>93</sup> UNICEF (2021) *Yemen Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report*, Reporting Period 1-31 March 2021.

<sup>94</sup> UNICEF (2020) *Yemen Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report*, Reporting Period 1-31 March 2020.

<sup>95</sup> Political Settlements Research Programme (2020) *Yemen's Response to COVID-19: Part II* - <https://www.politicalsettlements.org/2020/07/29/yemens-response-to-covid-19-part-ii/> [Accessed on 14 June 2021].

<sup>96</sup> Human Rights Watch (2021) *World Report 2021: Events of 2020*, Human Rights Watch: USA.

<sup>97</sup> UNICEF (2021) *Yemen Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report*, Reporting Period 1-31 March 2021.

Conversely, a lack of patient trust in facilities to properly protect them from contracting COVID-19 has resulted in a 25 percent decrease of facility use<sup>98</sup>. There are nearly 2000 active sentinel sites responsible for detecting communicable disease and electronically reporting the information to a centralised centre. These centres employ a network of over 18,000 community volunteers and religious leaders who conduct community-based surveillance, reporting of suspected cases for further investigation, and support the process of contact tracing.

The fragmentation in the public health leadership and governance structure mirrors the overall conflict, with *de facto* and *de jure* authorities controlling different parts of the country. The fragmented governance has also severely affected the health system management at the subnational level. While the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) remains the main actor in responding to health needs of the population, it faces constraints such as limited health information management capacity, inaccessibility to the field and underfunding, in addition to lack of coordination due to a split government with two health ministries.

The Health Cluster (HC), co-chaired by the MoPHP, is a platform for coordinating the work of health actors. In 2019 the HC coordinated efforts of 19 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 22 national NGOs and 3 UN agencies. (15) A subnational health cluster coordination mechanism, co-chaired by governorate health officers, has been established in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Ibb, Sa'ada and Sana'a. Since the emergence of COVID-19 in Yemen, the HC has continued to support partners towards achieving a more coordinated effort towards COVID-19 preparedness and response strategies<sup>99</sup>.

### **3.4.3 Water & Sanitation**

There is a link between water and conflict in Yemen. Water and sanitation systems have been systematically attacked, damaged and cut off during the conflict, which continues to have a negative impact on civilians, children in particular. Further, the current crisis has exacerbated the pre-conflict lack of access to clean water and led to an unprecedented cholera outbreak. The 2019 HNO estimated that more than half of the districts in Yemen (167 of 333) are in acute need of sanitation support. UNICEF estimates that over 8 million children require humanitarian assistance for consistent access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation<sup>100</sup>.

The pervasiveness of conditions such as cholera throughout the country and the emergence of dengue in Al Hudaydah are indicative of the need for redoubled focus on basic WASH needs of the population. About 75 percent of households without soap cited cost as the main reason, and trucked water prices have increased by 53 percent. Greater focus on personal hygiene as a preventative measure has increased responsibilities for household water provision, which is primarily handled by women and children. Water cuts in some governorates (especially war-torn governorates) make this work even harder, particularly for displaced women especially in south Yemen, who must travel long distances for hours to collect water from the host community. Such efforts put them at greater risk.

Access to water from the grid poses an additional challenge, with many Yemenis unable to access grid water supply at all. An IOM survey showed that 60 percent of households in rural areas said they do not have access to water from the grid, compared to 25 percent in urban areas<sup>101</sup>. Additional challenges include damaged water and sanitation services and infrastructure and cut off water crosslines.

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<sup>98</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>99</sup> Yemen HDPN Health Profile 2020

<sup>100</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>101</sup> Viewing the local level: assessment of living conditions, security, social cohesion, and service provision. IOM 2020

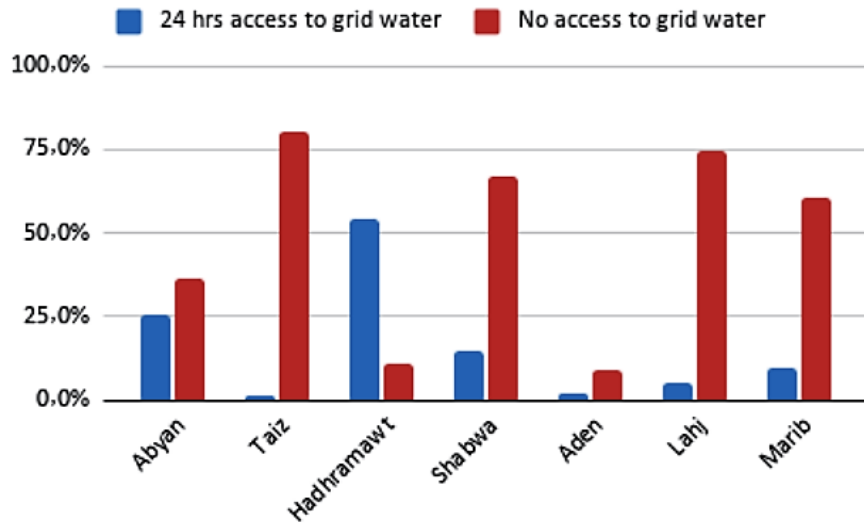


Figure 22. Grid water access. (Source: IOM 2020)

Water availability and access are persistent barriers. As a water scarce country, the tremendous amount of water used by the agriculture sector is a major threat in terms of water availability. UNICEF, UNOPS, and FAO are working on rationalising water use for agriculture, including pursuing waste-water treatment to meet the water requirements of the agricultural sector. Implementation evidence shows that large proportions of the population, particularly in urban areas, are reliant on purchased water (from water tanks). According to work conducted in six governorates, 30 percent of the population across those governorates (81 per cent in Sana’a City) have to pay to access water from improved sources<sup>102</sup>.

There is a clear link between suboptimal WASH and elevated risk of communicable disease outbreaks, and more between solid waste needs and risk to public health. The pervasiveness of conditions such as cholera throughout the country is indicative of the need for redoubled focus on the basic WASH needs of the population, which has a particularly devastating and life-threatening impact on children. Before the crisis, the country was making strides with respect to Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS).

However, with the escalation of armed conflict, it became infeasible to pursue the community engagement required to advance communities toward CLTS. WASH strengthening in institutional settings is occurring, albeit at a lesser extent than community WASH. There is, however, scope to improve the gender-sensitive aspects of both community and institutional WASH efforts. The emergence of COVID-19 is further justification for increased uptake of hygiene practices to mitigate disease transmission.

An analysis of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on Yemeni children showed that the downward trends in the number of people provided access to improved water supply and emergency water supply were more related to the effects of changes in the operating environment rather than the impact of COVID-19<sup>103</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>103</sup> SEF 2020

Due to the introduction of a new payment modality as part of risk mitigation measure towards the end of 2019 and the reduction in donors funding, WASH partners were forced to partially suspend WASH projects in 75 districts and to delay rehabilitation of water systems in 56 districts, reducing the total caseload by over 1.3 million individuals reached through water projects. These changes in the operating environment affected the UNICEF WASH program, which contributes about 80 percent of the total WASH Cluster caseload. If the situation continues, less than 30 percent of the people in need of improved water supply will have had access in 2020.

Prior to the escalation of conflict in 2015, the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) was one of the strongest, well-funded line ministries. That reality changed in the midst of the crisis. WASH has trended toward acting as a vertical programme during the response. Although joint planning exists (in addressing cholera), there were clearer synergies established prior to the crisis (related to young child survival efforts in the health sector). At present, streams of work such as WASH in schools is not managed by WASH stakeholders; but instead by education. About 70 percent of WASH implementation is currently occurring through local WASH authorities. However, these authorities lack leadership and participation of women, who are primarily responsible for community and family WASH<sup>104</sup>. Private-sector entities play defined roles with respect to the management of industrial waste and provision of bottled or packaged water.

#### **3.4.4 Education & Training**

The delivery of education services continued to face significant challenges in 2020. Of the 7.8 million school-aged children, an estimated 2.05 million children were out of school (400,000 because of the conflict) and the education of another 3.7 million children living in the North hangs in the balance as teachers' salaries have not been paid in years. Only two-thirds of schools are currently functioning (16,000 schools in total, including basic education and secondary schools), with 2,500 fully or partially damaged or occupied by parties to conflict and others hosting IDPs due to a lack of alternatives for them. This is further problematic as around 1.2 million children depend on school feeding for their nutritional needs.

About 36 percent of school-aged girls and 24 percent of school-aged boys do not attend school<sup>105</sup>. Poverty is a major underlying factor in both girls and boys dropping out of school, however, there is a need for a formal out-of-school children (OOSC) study to identify the types and locations of OOSC in Yemen. This information can, in turn, inform targeted and tailored responses to link more boys and girls with education<sup>106</sup>. Families must make a choice between sending their girls and boys to school versus the children helping to contribute to an income for the family. As UNICEF's recent Education Disruption report states: "As the population grows, the education system will need to accommodate an ever-growing number of adolescents and young people. If challenges to the education system are not adequately addressed today, as well as in the mid to longer term, there is a very real possibility that the potential of an entire generation of children will be lost<sup>107</sup>."

Attacks on schools and the military use of education facilities hamper access to education<sup>108</sup>. Attacks on schools are particularly harmful since the damage not only involves the destruction of buildings and killing of students but destroys the opportunities for boys and girls to get an education, and thus the very future of the country. The conflict

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<sup>104</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>105</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>106</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/yemen/media/5546/file/EDUCATION%20DISRUPTED%20Report.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> Yemen Humanitarian Fund Annual Report 2020

has thus severely disrupted the educational opportunities for boys and girls in Yemen. Two million boys (1.1 million) and girls (900,000) were out of school in 2019, with many at risk of dropping out entirely.

Lack of schooling poses significant exploitation risks to boys and girls such as violence against children, child labour and early marriage and exposes them to grave violations such as recruitment and use by parties to conflict, sexual violence and abductions. Lack of schooling furthermore hinders the opportunity for boys and girls to develop in a caring and stimulating environment which eventually increases the likelihood of a life in poverty and hardship. The conflict is particularly harmful to girls' educational opportunities as many families decide to keep their daughters at home due to fear of sexual harassment and violence on their commute to school.

A shortage of female teachers and gender segregated toilets, along with a prioritization of boys' education further widens the educational gender gap in Yemen. Girls not attending school are also increasingly vulnerable to early marriage and domestic violence by males who have lost their status as breadwinners as the economy has collapsed. Child mothers, adolescent wives and children who have been recruited and used in the conflict, are particularly vulnerable sub-groups to consider.

During the conflict, educational quality and learning outcomes have been a low priority among partners and donors, focused on the humanitarian crisis. However, education is key to the future and peace in Yemen, providing a bridge between humanitarian, peace, development, and recovery efforts, by helping to break the cycle of poverty, prevent child marriage and other negative coping mechanisms, and recruitment and use of children in the conflict. Girls' access to education, especially in Ansar Allah-controlled areas, faces significant challenges.

Schools were temporarily closed in 2020 (between mid-March and October) due to COVID-19, and an extended summer break. Exams were delayed, nonetheless took place in large parts of the country and the 2020/2021 school year started on time with schools open physically. UNICEF advises that the Ministry of Education authorities and partners developed a National Education COVID-19 response plan that includes distance learning as an action point.

Education data is outdated with the last EMIS report from 2015/2016 and the last nationally representative household survey data from 2013. UNICEF and others are currently engaged in efforts to revitalize the EMIS. There are several 'blind spots' in the evidence base to inform future efforts aimed at strengthening educational quality and learning outcomes (teacher training and training needs, pupil-teacher ratio, by level of education and geographical area, availability and needs for teaching and learning materials and textbooks).

Similarly, labour market data is outdated. The last Labour Force Survey was conducted in 2013-2014, at which time the overall labour force participation rate was a low 36.3 percent. According to the World Bank (2015), an estimated 700,000 individuals will reach working age every year between 2015 and 2045.

Yemen has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the region, reaching 45 percent. Youth unemployment rates are more than three times higher than those of adults, and significant gender discrepancies exist, as the unemployment rate is three times higher for young women. As a result, youth unemployment is one of the major challenges facing the Yemeni economy and "one of the main factors of political instability and insecurity," according to the Youth Employment Action Plan 2014-2017. The share of youth not in education, training, or employment (NEET) was also very high, reaching just over 48 percent even before the conflict, with significant disparities in NEET

rates across governorates. Uneven geographic distribution of education providers may be one of the reasons underpinning the gaps in participation in education, training, and employment across regions.

The sectors that employ most youth are agriculture, retail, and construction. The 2015 outbreak of conflict further exacerbated Yemen's youth insofar as restricted or no access to education and training. This contributes to a generation of Yemenis lacking the requisite skills to seek employment opportunities as they may arise. Under these circumstances, there is no alternative for some young people but to seek alternative sources of income to support themselves and help their families, making them vulnerable to manipulation by armed criminal or extremist groups operating in Yemen<sup>109</sup>.

The majority of the workforce has below secondary education attainment levels, with less than a third of the labour force holding secondary or tertiary degrees. Low educational attainment rates have negatively impacted productivity inside Yemen and led to poor labour market outcomes of Yemeni migrants abroad. There are no recent enterprise surveys for Yemen, but older surveys reveal that the vast majority of enterprises (97.5 percent of enterprises) are micro (78.4 percent) and small (19.1 percent) enterprises. According to the last survey by the World Bank, women comprise 5 percent of permanent full-time employees in enterprises and own only 6.5 percent of firms. Furthermore, and according to the latest labour market survey by the ILO, the majority of the workforce (81 percent) are engaged in informal employment.

### **3.4.5 Social Protection**

Social protection in Yemen lacks strategic direction and implementation. Social security is not informed by an overarching social protection strategy, is weakly developed and implemented in Yemen and is in several respects dysfunctional, due to the ongoing conflict. An earlier-developed Social Protection Strategy and a Disability Strategy were never formally adopted. The overall social protection system attempts to address vulnerability and poverty but falls short from a social risk- and life cycle-based approach. Even before the conflict started, in 2014, overall, public spending on social protection was very low at just 0.06–1 percent of GDP.

Yemenis across the country grapple with poverty, under-employment (including unemployment and informal employment), sexual- and gender-based violence and hunger. Achieving a coherent social safety net programming approach would require close collaboration between donors, implementing agencies and Yemeni authorities. These efforts must focus upon governance arrangements and institutional capacity, as well as maintaining technical functions and strengthening service delivery capacity. Donor agencies, implementing partners and national stakeholders are encouraged to agree upon and collaborate closely on data sharing, planning, programme execution and monitoring and evaluation<sup>110</sup>. Collaboration on risk and vulnerabilities assessment, evaluation of national social protection capacities, and then filling the gap between those capacities real social protection needs would also be beneficial.

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<sup>109</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>110</sup> SEF 2020

Integration of the informal forms of social protection should be considered in the overall system. Zakat<sup>111</sup> plays a critical role in community and household support and comprised 18 percent of GDP in 2009 – 2012<sup>112</sup>. An agreement with the Zakat House in Yemen could repurpose the money to serve the social protection needs of the most vulnerable. Similar efforts can be made with religious personal transfers (Takaful), personal endowments, and remittances. Long-term plans to spearhead the evidence-based development of a national social protection strategy should also be made. Both the contributory and the non-contributory social security environment must be strengthened and redesigned where necessary. Active steps must be taken to develop appropriate social protection interventions for the informal economy which accounts for 73.7 percent of total jobs. By 2018 – 2020, the self-employed constituted 85 percent of the total workforce due to job losses in the formal economy<sup>113</sup>.

The Social Protection framework is required that allows for a clearer operational understanding of how food, cash, and work interventions relate in addressing common outcomes. Each cluster can also start to specify the type of triggers – institutional but also peace-related issues such as the payments of salaries – that would allow for increased work with national institutions. Conditions allowing, it is possible to start merging projects into large and ambitious initiatives that can mobilise the country around the SDGs. Donors have increasingly become more sensitive to the need to coordinate around humanitarian and development efforts, as well as peace efforts. With the ongoing ceasefire negotiation, "confidence building measures" have grown, creating important incentives for increased donor funding. Several projects already operate along the HDP nexus – successfully integrating the humanitarian, development, and peace components. There is a need to mainstream Social Protection in HDP nexus programming including linking the national social protection coordination platform with the humanitarian platforms.

#### **3.4.6 Gender Equality**

Yemeni women are facing a multitude of challenges to equality, especially in areas outside the urban centre, where many women lack access to justice, and experience poverty, decent work or income-generating opportunities, gender-based violence, lack of education and illiteracy. If women's basic needs of food, shelter and safety are not fulfilled, their broader political and social participation are inevitably limited. The severity of the economic and humanitarian crisis requires gender-responsive interventions at various levels of government and society.

There may be more space for women's participation in more traditional, socially conservative and stable areas such as rural Ayban and Hadramawt. In contrast, space is shrinking in places like Aden and Sana'a, where there has been a resurgence in religious discourse and regressive gender norms. The revival alters social attitudes to such an extent that it is difficult for women to claim a role in public life in the way that became possible between 2011 and early 2015. While women actively participated in the protests during the 2011 uprising and contributed over 25 percent of participants to the National Dialogue Conference, the conflict has essentially reversed this progress. Yemen ranked last in the 2019/2020 Women Peace and Security Index<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> Zakat is a religious obligation. All Muslims who meet the necessary criteria donate a certain portion of wealth each year to charitable causes. Zakat is based on income and the value of possessions. The common minimum amount for those who qualify is 2.5%, or 1/40 of a Muslim's total savings and wealth.

<sup>112</sup> UNICEF 2019

<sup>113</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>114</sup> Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and Peace Research Institute Oslo. 2019. *Women, Peace and Security Index 2019/20: Tracking sustainable peace through inclusion, justice, and security for women*. Washington, DC: GIWPS and PRIO.

## CEDAW

While Yemen acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, Yemeni law disadvantages women, especially in family law. Women remain unprotected against sexual violence in many articles of the penal code, posing enormous challenges for women to denounce the crime if they face violence<sup>115</sup>. Religious, cultural, social, and political traditions drive the roles, responsibilities, and division of labor between women and men. Despite significant differences across Yemen depending on location, rural, and urban areas – and between tribes and generations – the overall situation of women in Yemen offers a somber reality. While the Government of Yemen adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security in December 2019, national policy frameworks in Yemen remain subject to competing priorities and slow implementation.

## Political Participation

For decades, Yemeni women and girls have actively sought a greater role and representation in public life and office and to have their rights fully respected and actualized through inclusive public policies, programs and services. Yemeni women are greatly under-represented in public life, in politics and the economy despite the 30 percent minimum National Dialogue Conference (NDC) quota for their participation in all state bodies and institutions. Despite the important role Yemeni women and youth play in peacebuilding, their contributions continue to be undervalued and unrecognized, and their participation in multi-track peace processes is limited. Since the start of the conflict in 2015, Yemeni women and youth have not performed an active role in peace-making processes with a few exceptions. While Yemeni women are actively engaged and well represented in informal and community politics, they are almost absent from senior leadership positions in political parties and government which are also traditional pathways into the negotiating delegations for peace talks. Yemeni women hold just 4.1 percent of decision-making positions<sup>116</sup>. The Government of Yemen's current cabinet does not have a single woman member.

Further, the UN Panel of Experts found that since 2017, Ansar Allah had consistently targeted women engaged in politics, civil demonstrations, and those working on NGO projects promoting women's empowerment and women peace and security. In a total of 11 cases documented by the Panel, women were arrested, detained, beaten, tortured and/or sexually abused because of their political affiliations or participation in political activities or public protests. These women were threatened with charges of prostitution or organized crime if they persisted in activities against the Houthis. The Panel also found that NGO project initiatives focusing on women, peace, and security or on women's empowerment, struggle to gain approval from these authorities<sup>117</sup>.

The judicial institutions in Yemen continue to be male dominated. There are 160 women among the country's 3000 judges and prosecutors<sup>118</sup>. There are currently no women on the High Judicial Council and only one, the Vice-Chair, out of the nine judges of the Supreme Court of the Government of Yemen. Women's entry into the High Judicial Institute has also been stopped by the de facto authorities – a measure which was opened to them in 2006. The Supreme Court operating in Sana'a has no women among its 48 judges. In December 2020, the Government of Yemen's new cabinet was formed without a woman among the 24 ministers: the first time in 20 years this has occurred. In addition, the low numbers of women and young people in face-to-face talks and informal discussions

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115 Yemen – Gender justice and the law. UNDP, in collaboration with UN Women, UNFPA and ESCWA.

116 Global Gender Gap Report. 2021. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

117 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council*, 28 January 2020, S/2020/326.

118 OHCHR interview with Secretary-General of the Yemeni Judges' Club. Mujahed, Rawa Abdallah. 20 February 2021.



remains a pressing concern. In the negotiations led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as part of the 2019 Riyadh Agreement, no women were represented in the Government of Yemen delegation or in the delegation of the Southern Transitional Council, nor in subsequent negotiations on the implementation of the political, military and security arrangements. The Riyadh Agreement implementation resulted in the new Cabinet includes no women ministers.

Despite the parties' resistance to including women and youth in their delegations and despite the structural, social, political and economic challenges, Yemeni women mediators and women's groups play key roles in peacebuilding at all levels of society including local ceasefires, mediating to end conflicts over water and land resources, negotiating humanitarian access, and protection. The UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (Group of Eminent Experts) reports that women have taken the lead in mediating hundreds of detention releases at a local and strategic level, where the conflicting parties have failed to do so<sup>119</sup>.

Violence against women participating in politics is widespread in Yemen which negatively affects the democratic process and the integration of women into the political process in general. Violence against women in politics encompasses all forms of aggression, coercion, and intimidation against women as political actors simply because they are women. It is used to reinforce traditional social and political structures by targeting women leaders who challenge patriarchy and the prevailing social expectations and norms. Threats of violence, insults based on appearance, or belittling comments based on gender stereotypes. These are actions that undermine female politicians and deny their fundamental human rights. This is what Yemeni women are experiencing in the political sphere today.

### Women's Economic Situation

According to article 41 of the Yemeni Constitution all citizens are equal in rights and duties. In addition, Labor Law No. 5 of 1995, determined that women should get equal pay, promotion, opportunities, training and duties and prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex<sup>120</sup>. Although the constitution guarantees all citizens right to participate in the economic life of the country, the majority of Yemen's labor force is male - Yemeni women account for only 6.3 percent of the labour force and earn just 7 percent of what men do<sup>121</sup>. An estimated 48 percent of Yemeni women are illiterate; and only 2 percent of Yemeni women have a bank account<sup>122</sup>.

There is also a negative stigma around women who work outside the home. From a young age, girls are expected to take a huge responsibility within the household and to leave school to devote themselves to serve families and husbands. However, with the increased number of female-headed households due to displacement and male family members absent in combat, women and girls have taken on new responsibilities and decision-making roles out of financial necessity caused by economic crisis and the loss of male breadwinners<sup>123</sup>.

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119 Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen. 2020. *Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014*. Report to the Human Rights Council. 28 September 2020. A/HRC/45/CRP.7 Para. 191.

120 Labor Code, Act No. 5 of 1995, Republic of Yemen, <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/44043/65001/E95YEM01.htm#a42>

121 [http://sanaacenter.org/files/Rethinking\\_Yemens\\_Economy-policy\\_brief\\_13.pdf](http://sanaacenter.org/files/Rethinking_Yemens_Economy-policy_brief_13.pdf)

122 Ganter, Elvira and Charlotte Burow. 2017. Promoting Women's Financial Inclusion, Yemen. GIZ.

123 UNFPA Yemen website. Page: Gender-based violence <https://yemen.unfpa.org/en/node/22534> Accessed February 2021

Consequently, more Yemeni women started new businesses over the past years, for example home-based businesses like producing food or selling clothes due to the financial necessity of supporting their families<sup>124</sup>. COVID-19's global recession resulted in a prolonged dip in women's incomes and labor participation which especially affects women-led businesses<sup>125</sup>. This increased Yemeni women's exposure to unemployment, economic marginalization and poverty. Women are under increasing economic pressure, with many struggling to provide for their families, often with limited or no prior experience in income-generating activities.

#### Gender-Based Violence and conflict-related sexual violence

Women and girls suffered disproportionately from GBV, poverty and violations of basic rights even prior to the conflict. Now, they face rising risks and vulnerabilities. Reports of various forms of violence against women significantly increased during the COVID-19 lockdown. The Secretary General's 2021 Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence reported several cases of sexual violence and rape against IDPs, women in detention settings<sup>126</sup>. The number of instances of GBV is likely to be much higher than reported as sexual violence is associated with significant stigma and is underreported in Yemen.

A 2019 report on gender and the Yemeni war by Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies found that women were often blamed for the violence and abuse perpetuated against them. Drug abuse and financial insecurity was mentioned as some of the reasons for the rise in domestic violence during the conflict. Women's participation in the labour market was also mentioned as an explanatory variable for the increase in GBV, as women thus were more present in the public sphere, less devoted to religious norms, and that their participation in the labor market poses significant threat to the financial authority of males who might therefore resort to violence to establish their role as the head of the household. The end of the war is also unlikely to end domestic violence as men who had participated in the conflict are likely to be severely traumatized from the war and are expected to turn the household into a battleground<sup>127</sup>.

The lack of security that women face during conflict manifests itself in reduced freedom of movement due to the increasing risks of arrest, ill-treatment at checkpoints, increased vulnerability to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and conflict-related sexual violence. The Yemen Protection Brief<sup>128</sup> points out that GBV has risen by 63 percent during the conflict. Tensions within families partly cause the rise due to frustrations from lack of income and loss of livelihoods. Secondly, the conflict has brought a three-fold increase of girl-child marriage incidences<sup>129</sup> seen by families to ensure better living conditions for the girl and simultaneously reduce her burden on the household. Thirdly, women in female-headed households have become the primary income providers and are more impoverished and subject to higher food insecurity. Women's dependence on humanitarian assistance has increased, and access to health care and education has lowered.

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124 Al-Ammar, Fawziah and Hannah Patchett. 2019. *The Repercussions of War on Women in the Yemeni Workforce. Re-thinking Yemen's Economy*. Policy Brief No. 13. Sana'a Centre for Strategic Studies. 23 July.

125 UN Women. 2020. *Rapid Assessment: The Effects of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women and Gendered Social Norms - A Snapshot from Nine Countries in the Arab States Preliminary*

126 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S\\_2021\\_312\\_E.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_312_E.pdf)

127 UNICEF Risk Analysis 2020

128 Protection Cluster Yemen, Yemen Protection Brief, October 2020

129 There is no mention of a minimum age of marriage in the personal status code and its amendments

### 3.5 Leave No One Behind Social Exclusion Analysis

Vulnerable and marginalised groups are bearing the brunt of the conflict due to limited social safety nets, increased levels of poverty and poor-quality housing amplifying protection risks such as domestic violence, child labour/recruitment and use and child marriage. Rule of Law is extremely weak as judicial structures have been eroded by years of under-development and now conflict. Socio-cultural norms have failed to protect large segments of society such as women, children, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups such as Muhamasheen and IDPs. Impunity prevails, and is aggravated by both traditional practices and the lack of payment of civil servants. While traditional or tribal transitional justice systems may seek to address some of the issues, they do so often in disregard of human rights of the most vulnerable.

The groups most at risk of being left behind in Yemen include: children/ youth - especially girls; women; Internally Displaced People (IDPs); refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; Muhamasheen; LGBTQ+, and persons with disabilities. While there are likely other vulnerable groups (including but not limited to the elderly, those with HIV/AIDS) in Yemeni society, these groups are not mentioned (or not mentioned in detail) in the literature provided for review as part of this CCA.

#### 3.5.1 Women & Girls

Diverse religious, cultural, social, and political traditions shape gender relations across Yemen's regions, between rural and urban areas, and between different tribes and generations. The north has traditionally been more socially conservative than the south. Prevailing cultural attitudes, patriarchal structures, extremist and Islamic fundamentalism lead to systematic discrimination and marginalization against women and girls - affording them a low status in the family, the community, and limiting their participation in public life.

An estimated 73 percent of the over 4 million people displaced in Yemen are women and children, while approximately 30 percent of displaced households are now headed by women, compared to 9 percent before the escalation of the conflict in 2015. An estimated 5 million women and girls who have reached puberty, and 1.7 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, have limited or no access to reproductive health services, including antenatal care, safe delivery, postnatal care, family planning, and emergency obstetric and newborn care. One pregnant Yemeni girl or woman dies every two hours during childbirth, from causes that are almost entirely preventable. Negative maternal health outcomes are experienced by married girls, with 1 in 10 married girls losing their baby during childbirth.

Over 1 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition sometime in the course of 2021. They risk giving birth to newborns with severe stunted growth because of rising food insecurity. Only 20 percent of functioning health facilities provide maternal and child health services due to lack of essential medicines, supplies and specialized staff. There are only 10 health workers per 10,000 people – less than half the WHO minimum benchmark, and 67 out of the 333 districts in Yemen have no doctors. Yemeni women bear the burden of food insecurity while caring for malnourished children while also facing increasing malnutrition themselves ( an estimated 7 out of every 10 women of reproductive age in Yemen are estimated to be anaemic), in addition to other adverse health outcomes<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>130</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

Although before the COVID-19 pandemic, only 35 percent of women in rural areas could access skilled maternal health professionals during the delivery, during the pandemic the number of unattended deliveries increased. The effect is particularly hard on married girls under the age of 18. The situation is even worse for IDPs in hosting sites, where only 8 percent of sites have access to adequate reproductive health services<sup>131</sup>. Women and adolescent girls, especially those in IDP sites, have found it hard to manage their menstrual needs during this time due to lack of access to female-hygiene products.

Child marriage rates are escalating. Yemen is one of the few countries in the Arab region without a legal minimum age of marriage. Attempts to set 18 as the minimum age of marriage collapsed with the outbreak of the conflict. Nearly two thirds of girls in Yemen are married before the age of 18 and many before they are 15 years of age. Negative maternal health outcomes were also experienced among married girls.

Around 36 percent of Yemeni girls do not attend school. Several factors inform that choice made by the family, including large family size and gender norms that a) prioritise educating boys over girls, b) encourage early marriage of girls and/or c) place the burden of household chores and caring for younger siblings on girls.

### 3.5.2 Children

Half of Yemen's population are children. The Secretary-General's 2021 Report on Grave Violations Against Children reported 4,418 grave violations against 1,287 children (944 boys, 343 girls) in 2020, as well as the recruitment and use of 163 children (134 boys, 29 girls) by Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) (115), the Yemen Armed Forces (34), the Security Belt Forces (10) and unidentified perpetrators (4). Most children (92) were used in combat roles, and a third of these children were victims of other violations during their association with parties to conflict, including killing and maiming. The main causes for child casualties were mortar and artillery shelling (339), gunshots and crossfire (305), explosive remnants of war (212) and air strikes (150). Most casualties occurred in Hudaydah (242), Ta'izz (239), Ma'rib (132) and Jawf (129) Governorates<sup>132</sup>. The threats facing children in Yemen are unacceptable:

- One child dies every 11 minutes and 55 seconds
- 36 percent of school-aged children without access to schools
- 45 percent of children are stunted (chronically malnourished)
- 1 mother and 6 newborns die every two hours<sup>133</sup>.

Many children (28 percent boys and 27 percent girls with a disproportionately higher percentage amongst the Muhamasheen) do not have birth certificates, which prevents them accessing education and health care but also could expose them to risks of statelessness, furthering their vulnerabilities. Children are often reported having trauma linked to the conflict, injuries and displacements<sup>134</sup>.

Children are particularly vulnerable to often-hidden explosive ordinances (EO); in 2019, 102 (31 percent) of the casualties stemming from EOs were children. Many public schools are damaged and overcrowded as students leave private schools due to financial constraints or displacement. While the military use of schools severely disrupts

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<sup>131</sup> The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Yemen 2020

<sup>132</sup> [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2021/437&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2021/437&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC)

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF SitAn 2020

<sup>134</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

education and puts boys and girls in serious danger, the use of schools for military purposes also turns the site into potential targets for air strikes by the Saudi Coalition and shelling by Ansar Allah allied fighters.

UNICEF's *Analysis of Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Children in Yemen* report compared March – April 2020 data with the same period in 2019, showing a dramatic reduction in maternal and child health and nutrition service provision:

- **Healthcare:** Access to community-based maternal and neonatal care interventions fell (antenatal visits by 42 percent) and all outreach activities ceased in 2020. About one quarter of the eligible children may miss their vaccination and 30 percent of the women who require primary health care at home will have to do without should home-based care and outreach activities continue to be impaired.
- **Nutrition:** Children and pregnant and lactating women receiving nutrition services were down significantly, especially for the components provided during home visits. For example, Vitamin A decreased by 74.5 percent; growth monitoring decreased by 64.6 percent; and screening for acute malnutrition decreased by 30.6 percent. If community outreach activities do not resume, 90 percent of the children in need of malnutrition prevention services will not be reached in 2020.
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** The number of people, including children, provided access to emergency water supply and with emergency sanitation support was reduced by about 50 percent.
- **Education:** Approximately 5.8 million students of basic and secondary schools are currently not attending and do not have access to online learning. Out-of-school children enrolled in non-formal and/or alternative education decreased by 81.9 percent and 1.2 million children have been denied school feeding for their nutritional needs.
- **Child protection:** Children and caregivers reached with psychosocial support and meals ready to eat were reduced by 89 percent and 98 percent respectively. Children reached with critical protection services reduced by 29.4 percent and recorded cases of violence against children and women dropped by 51.1 percent (underreporting is expected to be the cause of this decline)<sup>135</sup>.

Boys and girls are recruited and used by parties to conflict in order to provide for their families and are usually paid around \$120 per month. These beliefs are often cultivated by family members and a widespread social acceptance exists of Ansar Allah recruitment as a necessary means for protection against intruding enemies. Parties to conflict in the eastern and southern parts of Yemen such as AQAP have also been active in the recruitment and use of boys and girls, and these groups see a whole generation of disenfranchised youth as potential recruits. They use the lack of provision of services to gain support among local communities and recruit young males with limited livelihood opportunities.

### **3.5.3 Internally Displaced People**

Currently there are more than 4 million IDPs in Yemen. In 2020, more than 172,000 people were newly displaced. More than 70 percent of IDPs in Yemen are women and children, and approximately 30 percent of displaced households are female headed compared to 9 percent before conflict escalated in 2015. Displacement is driven by conflict and natural hazards and disasters. Large scale movements were seen in Marib in 2020 where an escalation in hostilities began in January and is expected to continue into 2021. It is estimated that some 172,000 individuals (28,750 HHs) were newly displaced in 2020 largely in Marib Governorate, which accounted for 45 percent of all new displacements recorded countrywide<sup>136</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>136</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

The displacement trends in 2020 decreased by 50 percent in comparison to 2019. Some 50 percent of the IDPs sites are located within 5kms from active frontlines. This exposes IDPs disproportionately to the effects of armed conflict as they often have no access to safe locations or safe passage to other locations. Most of the IDPs are located in Marib, Taiz, Hajjah and Al Hudaydah governorates. Around 63 percent live in areas under the control of Ansar Allah in the North and others live in areas under control of the Government of Yemen (about 37 percent)<sup>137</sup>.

Further, IDPs in hosting sites are vulnerable to eviction as most of the hosting sites are established on private land. Inadequate shelters and evictions both in urban areas and spontaneous IDP hosting sites further marginalise IDPs. More than one fourth are assessed as eligible for rental subsidies, and half of IDPs receiving cash indicate using part of it for rent. Many are at risk of evictions as they are unable to afford the rent, or private landowners claim their land back at short notice. Evictions are often accompanied by the use of force and physical abuse or arrest and detention. They may also lead to premature returns to unsafe areas. Legal remedies are mostly not available as ensuring land tenure, tenancy contracts or mediation in the context of property disputes are yet to be put in place by the authorities.

A large number of IDPs returned to their areas of origin in 2015, especially to Aden and Amanat Al Asimah governorate. Returns continued throughout the conflict, albeit at a lower pace, especially to Taiz, Sa'ada and Shabwah governorates. In 2020, only some 3,300 returns have been recorded, mainly to Al Dhale'e, Taiz, Marib, Shabwah, Lahj and Al Bayda governorates, while some 137,500 IDPs have been newly displaced due to conflict, mainly in Marib, Al Dhale'e, Taiz and Al Hudaydah governorates<sup>138</sup>. However, many IDPs do not have a home to return to: a 2020 World Bank Group study found that 40 percent of all housing assets in cities had been damaged since the start of the conflict and 2 percent had been destroyed beyond repair<sup>139</sup>.

Numerous incidents due to the presence of UXO and landmines are a particular risk upon return, especially endangering children, as few return areas have been cleared. Some IDPs report preferring going back home, even to unsafe areas, than being discriminated against in locations where they initially found safety. Protection monitoring shows that 69 percent of IDPs wish to return home within six months of their displacement while 25 percent indicate preferring remaining where they are<sup>140</sup>.

Northerners<sup>141</sup> currently residing in Aden and the surrounding districts are particularly vulnerable to increased fighting as the STC might consider them to be affiliated with Ansar Allah. STC affiliated forces have been known to execute, harass and detain males from the north. There are currently more than 45,000 IDPs originally from the North residing in Aden. They face daily discrimination and harassment, and have been subjected to arrest, detention, verbal abuse, beatings and seizure of personal valuables. Many have fled to Taiz and other governorates in the north, but many have been too afraid to leave their homes, even for essential goods and aid. Many northerners and IDPs suffer from psychological and mental trauma as a result of the violent conflict.

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<sup>137</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

<sup>138</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

<sup>139</sup> HRP 2021

<sup>140</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

<sup>141</sup> This is Yemen from governorates belonging to Yemen's traditional north as part of the former Yemen Arab Republic, prior to the merger with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, aka South Yemen.

Many internally displaced communities mostly consist of women and children because the males stay behind in the conflict zone fighting or trying to sustain their livelihood. This means that IDPs often find themselves in a precarious economic situation without the traditional breadwinners, which is further exacerbated as women are excluded from markets and other economic activities. Displacement decreases resilience and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, resulting in higher needs and negative coping mechanisms leading to protection risks along with critical exposure to food insecurity and epidemic outbreaks. With limited shelter options, displaced women and girls tend to suffer most from lack of privacy, threats to safety, and limited access to basic services, making them even more vulnerable to violence and abuse. For instance, displaced girls are more likely to lose access to schooling as families with limited resources de-prioritize their right to education.

Given the protracted displacement situation, the shelter needs of both IDPs and host communities are increasing at a much faster pace than the funding made available for that type of intervention. Half of the informal IDPs sites are not reached by humanitarian partners, and access to remote locations or close to active areas of conflict remains particularly difficult. In addition, issues related to delays in the importation of construction material, and the quality of the imported material locally available have limited the sustainability of shelter interventions.

The legal rights of IDPs face several challenges, including:

- A weak judicial system, absence of rule of law, the contest between statutory law and tribal justice;
- Social and cultural norms rooted in tribal customs and practices that permeate the justice system continue to govern a considerable number of legal issues, which often disregard the respect of human rights of persons with specific needs;
- Economic vulnerability precludes them from the ability to cover the costs to obtain civil status documentation for all family members; to solicit private legal counsel, mediation, and representation.

Around 1,100 out of the total of 1,600 IDP sites could not be fully supported in 2020 due to the magnitude and dispersion of displacements and the range of needs of the IDPs hosted on these informal sites ranging from health, food and nutrition, education, shelter, and WASH, as well as funding limitations and challenges related to partners' access to the sites due to authorities' restrictions. The impact of new displacements and two exceptional flooding seasons saw at least 27,000 families left without assistance in 2020 as donors and the humanitarian sector prioritized famine and health needs.

#### **3.5.4 Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants**

As of late 2020, Yemen hosted approximately 138,000 migrants and 177,600 refugees and asylum-seekers. Over 90 percent of migrants are of Ethiopian origin and are mostly in transit to Gulf countries to seek livelihood opportunities. They are predominantly young males; the remaining are 18 percent women and 11 percent unaccompanied children. Refugees and asylum seekers are mainly Somali with some Ethiopians and a small number of individuals from Eritrea, Syria and Iraq. About 40 percent of the refugee and asylum-seeker population are women and 20 percent are children<sup>142</sup>. Aden (47 percent), Amanat Al Asimah (36 percent), Hadramout (7 percent) and Lahj (5 percent) were the governorates with the highest density of refugee populations.

Yemen has been receiving migrants from the Horn of Africa who pass through the country enroute to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, international and domestic travel restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19

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<sup>142</sup> HRP 2021

pandemic did result in a 73 percent reduction of migrants to Yemen (from 138,000 in 2019 to around 37,500 in 2020). While the number of migrants significantly decreased, the asylum space remained constrained, particularly in the North.

The registration and documentation of refugees and asylum seekers by Ansar Allah did not resume, leaving 95 percent of refugees in the north without valid documentation with resumption of renewal process in early 2021 although at a slow pace. At the end of 2020, Yemen hosted 177,600 refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR implemented a population review exercise. The review focused on persons who had never visited a UNHCR or official registration centre, and so were officially unregistered. The review also considered the spontaneous return of 36,886 unregistered Somali nationals from Yemen to Somalia between 2016 and 2019, as confirmed by the UNHCR Office in Somalia<sup>143</sup>.

Refugees' housing/shelter conditions have amplified health and other protection risks because different families must share housing and facilities. Cases of domestic violence and other GBV cases among refugees have been reported. Poor water sanitation infrastructure remained a significant challenge contributing to the spread of water-borne diseases. The heavy rainfalls in Aden and some other southern governorates contributed to an increase in the number of reported malaria and dengue cases. Access issues and inadequate coverage of routine vaccinations contributed to the spread of measles and diphtheria.

Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers are all highly vulnerable during their time in Yemen and in their journeys to and from their countries of origin, asylum and final destination. Children engage in harmful coping mechanisms such as working in the streets and begging, particularly during school closures, which exposes them to further risk of violence and exploitation<sup>144</sup>.

For migrant women, incidents of SGBV including rape are prevalent along the migration route. Violations are often perpetrated by smugglers and SGBV appears to have been normalized in smuggling networks. High rates of SGBV are due to a range of underlying factors, notably: lack of state presence and authority, lack of ability of migrants to access formal protection mechanisms and vulnerability due to lack of resources, documentation, and knowledge of their context. This concludes that migrant women are more subjected to trafficking, and they are often asked to pay more than the male migrants. While there are no laws prohibiting migrants from seeking healthcare, migrants fear institutions due to the risk of detention.

Most refugees and asylum-seekers depend on support and services, due to little prospect for durable solutions, given the limited resettlement opportunities and the suspension of the assisted return of Somali due to the pandemic<sup>145</sup>. While UNHCR cash assistance is the only source of income for 73 percent of beneficiaries, the current amount does not cover all the daily expenses, triggering harmful coping mechanisms such as begging, child marriages or school dropouts. In addition, they are unable to adhere to safe hygiene practices due to inherent poor living conditions, lack of access to hygiene items and lack of awareness.

The enrolment rate in secondary education among refugees remained low, due to the very limited support provided to secondary education students, limited opportunities to pursue higher education and the general preference by

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<sup>143</sup> UNCT Report 2020

<sup>144</sup> The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Yemen 2020

<sup>145</sup> UNHCR End of Year Report 2020



parents to engage children in income generating activities at an early age to contribute to the self-reliance of the family. Opportunities for the integration of children with disabilities in schooling remained scarce, since only private schools provide adequate services, which refugee parents are unable to afford. Due to the relatively limited scope of UNHCR's intervention in the provision of assistive devices to children with disability, the needs were far from being met.

Refugees and asylum seekers suffered disproportionately from the economic downturn and the COVID-19 crisis, by experiencing increasing levels of intolerance and marginalisation, and by losing their livelihoods in the informal economy, severely affected by the pandemic. They remained highly vulnerable socio-economically and legally, particularly in the north, where, by end-2020, some 95 percent held expired documentation due suspended registration/documentation activities since August 2019<sup>146</sup>.

### **3.5.5 Persons with Disabilities**

WHO estimates that 4.5 million Yemenis have at least one disability, however the actual figure is likely to be much higher, including as a result of the conflict. Persons with disabilities face specific challenges including higher levels of poverty, greater dependence on government services and financial support, unequal access to quality health services, education and employment opportunities, humanitarian aid, sanitation facilities, adequate living conditions, difficulties fleeing violence and challenges living in poor housing conditions in IDP camps when displaced.<sup>147</sup> Their access to aid and services is often restricted and investment in interventions that take into account their specific needs is extremely limited in Yemen. Despite being a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the government of Yemen has not fulfilled its obligations in providing the necessary services or financial support to persons with disabilities or the organizations which provide them with various services.<sup>148</sup>

The number of persons with disabilities has increased due to the conflict, especially people with physical disabilities. Children with disabilities remain one of the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups and experience multiple challenges, including difficulty in accessing education, health care services, and other basic services and an increased risk of abuse and exploitation. Hidden behind closed doors, shut away in institutions, and stigmatized, many children with disabilities are often overlooked and under-estimated<sup>149</sup>. Women and girls with disabilities face even a greater risk of GBV and available services are not equipped logistically to accommodate their needs.

As the conflict continues to push more Yemeni families into poverty, it expanded the risk and burden on persons with disabilities, especially on children with disabilities. Poor children are more likely to become disabled through poor healthcare, malnutrition, lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation, dangerous living, and working conditions. Once disabled, they are more likely to be denied basic resources that would mitigate or prevent deepening poverty. Poverty and disability reinforce each other, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion.

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<sup>146</sup> UNHCR End of Year Report 2020

<sup>147</sup> "Excluded: Living with Disabilities in Yemen's Armed Conflict." 2019. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE3113832019ENGLISH.PDF>

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Mapping Available Assistance to Children with Disabilities in Yemen, December 2020

Yemen's legislation allows for significant support for persons with disabilities, however, this has been severely cut as a result of the economic impact of the war. Yemen's strategy follows a medical model, rather than a human rights model of disability, and there are no efforts to accommodate accessibility of persons with disabilities in mainstream public services and public. Laws protecting their right to work are limited in preventing discrimination against persons with disabilities, but nonetheless, include a quota of 5 percent for persons with disabilities in the public sector.

### 3.5.6 Ethnic & Religious Minorities

The Muhamasheen - an ethnic minority in Yemen who are seen as second-class citizens - represent about 10 percent of Yemen's population. They mostly live outside Yemen's traditional tribal social structures, with sizeable communities in conflict-affected cities, including Aden, Al Hudaydah, and Ta'iz. The Muhamasheen do not enjoy full citizenship rights, and for many years, even decades before the conflict, this group has suffered widespread discrimination, social exclusion, and reduced access to public services.

Reports of violence targeting the Muhamasheen, including gender-based violence, also are common. Nearly 40 percent of Muhamasheen women have never attended school. Many Muhamasheen have fled their homes as a result of the conflict. IDPs from this group are less likely to be hosted by local communities due to social prejudice. Therefore, they are more likely to seek shelter on farmland, in public spaces, or other substandard living conditions<sup>150</sup>. Muhamasheen have suffered discrimination, exploitation, and poverty for centuries in Yemen. The group had only limited access to education, livelihood opportunities and basic services before the conflict escalated in 2015; since then, their needs have only deepened.

Muhamasheen are excluded from public sector jobs except in waste management, and in the private sector, they are typically engaged in low-paid, stigmatized work. They usually live in slums and on the outskirts of cities, in makeshift shelters, often without electricity or clean water, which heightens their exposure to evictions and limits their access to services. It is estimated that they represent a significant part of the population in the IDP sites<sup>151</sup>. Because of the poor condition of their housing within the slums, the rainy season becomes another challenge. Deaths and injuries are common in the slums during the rainy season due to shelter damage and collapse. This also exacerbates the risk of communicable disease because of the poor sewage system in the slums<sup>152</sup>.

Laws in Yemen do not specifically discriminate against the Muhamasheen, but the group continues to suffer from informal systemic discrimination by local authorities and administrative structures, and thus lack basic political and civil rights. Aden, Taiz and Al Hudaydah are some of the cities most affected by the war, and also the cities with the largest concentration of Muhamasheen communities. The Muhamasheen were among the first to be internally displaced and often struggle to access basic services and are in some areas systematically excluded from assistance. The lack of tribal connections has meant that they often take shelter in public parks or farmlands where they are often herded away by the landowner when discovered. Resentment towards the Muhamasheen has increased in Taiz as many local organizations complain that international humanitarian assistance seems favour the Muhamasheen, as they have been added to beneficiary lists by aid workers<sup>153</sup>.

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<sup>150</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>151</sup> HRP 2021

<sup>152</sup> UNICEF Child Centered Risk and multi-hazard Analysis 2020

<sup>153</sup> UNICEF Risk Analysis 2020

Muhamasheen face restrictions on access to aid and services and investment in interventions that take into account their specific needs is extremely limited in Yemen. In Aden, many displaced Muhamasheen from Hudaydah and Taiz governates live in IDP camps where allegations are made that there is a deliberate attempt to change the demographic composition of the population to prevent alleged aspiration to secession.

### **3.5.7 LGBTQ+**

Homosexuality is condemned under the country's strong Islamic beliefs. Homosexuality is illegal in Yemen in accordance with Shari'a law. Yemen remains one of the seven states in the world where the death penalty is applied to consensual adults of the same sex. In terms of Human Rights in Yemen, freedom of speech, the press and religion are all restricted, therefore homosexuality in the State is both 'unseen and unheard'. It is kept underground, hidden from authorities and a disapproving society. As such there are few reported cases of violence against the LGBTQ+ community.

The Secretary General's 2021 Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence reported "Persons with diverse sexual orientations or gender identities faced heightened risks of sexual and other violence, particularly in detention settings, owing to deep-rooted patriarchal norms. The Group of Eminent Experts documented nine cases of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, torture and sexual violence perpetrated by the Houthis and Security Belt Forces against individuals accused of spreading prostitution and homosexuality and supporting the enemy<sup>154</sup>."

### **3.5.8 Cross-Cutting Areas of Leave No One Behind**

IDPs, migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and Muhamasheen lack sustainable livelihoods and access to property rights, lack access to basic services and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation with limited access to justice. They face systemic discrimination and are at perpetual risk of physical violence due to their displacement status. Social cohesion and peaceful co-existence are constantly in jeopardy as discrimination pushes them into poverty and further marginalisation as they are seen as second-class citizens living off on humanitarian assistance and local resources by host communities. They are also perceived by some as not participating in the defence of the territory.

Muhamasheen are particularly affected by these perceptions coupled with the belief that they traditionally hold different values and norms than the rest of the Yemeni society. Host communities have been equally affected by the socio-economic impacts of the conflict and the further erosion of public services, especially health services, which in turn, undermined their level of acceptance of minority groups. Minority children report being bullied at school ( called derogatory names) and often report facing physical violence. Similarly, displaced women face insults and discrimination in accessing public services.

#### Lack of Documentation

A lack of birth certificates and identification documents, coupled with a lack of understanding of legal procedures, and inherent discrimination within the dysfunctional justice system, limit access of LNOB groups to education and other public services, increasing social exclusion. Protection monitoring reveals that 5 percent of the displaced do not have any form of identification and only 54 percent are in the possession of a new national ID card, which is increasingly a requirement to access public services (health care and education). The lack of documentation increase risks of arbitrary arrest and detention especially at checkpoints and hinders access to livelihood and life-saving assistance as it limits their freedom of movement<sup>155</sup>. For refugees and asylum-seekers, a lack of official papers

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<sup>154</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S\\_2021\\_312\\_E.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_312_E.pdf)

<sup>155</sup> UNHCR IDP Protection Strategy 2020-2021

combined with cultural and security constraints, thus makes it difficult for women and children to access certain food distribution sites. Access to civil registration is limited, which in turn undermines access to services due to lack of national identity documents, marriage/birth/death certificates and family cards.

### Shelter

Shelter is an issue of concern for many of Yemen's most vulnerable. Some 50 percent of IDPs sites are located within 5kms from active frontlines, which exposes IDPs disproportionately to the effects of armed conflict as they often have no access to safe locations or safe passage to other locations. More than a million displaced people are scattered in 1,600 makeshift sites across Yemen.

Most sites host pregnant and nursing women and girls, elderly people, female-headed households and persons with disabilities and people with chronic diseases. More than a million IDPs live in sites where shelter conditions are inadequate, overcrowding is commonplace, protection risks are severe and basic services are limited. Assessments indicate that only 9 percent of IDP hosting sites have adequate WASH services, and only 6 percent have waste disposal. About 35 percent of sites report open defecation due to lack or inadequacy of WASH facilities. In these settings, IDPs face high risks of water contamination and infectious disease.

Sites often lack gender-segregated facilities, putting women and girls at particular risk of GBV. Some public toilets are only accessible to women after dark for privacy reasons. Barriers restricting access to latrines/toilets existed pre-pandemic but have intensified during this time of the pandemic. These barriers include social norms about privacy for women, lack of water, absence of locks and light, and limited maintenance of the latrines. Bullying and veiled accusations against marginalized IDP groups (Muhamasheen), have restricted their access to water, especially those living within or nearby host communities. Scarcity of water complicates the suffering of these groups during the time of COVID-19<sup>156</sup>.

### COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused IDPs, refugees, migrants, and persons with disabilities, women, and girls to lose access to services and livelihood opportunities, resulting in greater protection risks and negative coping mechanisms. Confinement and lack of resources due to the pandemic, in addition to social and cultural mobility restrictions, renders IDP, refugee, migrant, and persons with disabilities, women and girls unable to seek outside help for GBV. Online services are inaccessible to many of these women and girls – either they have no mobile phone, or their illiteracy prevents them from using a phone. Notably, access to legal redress for GBV and PSEA is difficult, if not impossible, especially for women and girls from rural areas and conflict zones<sup>157</sup>.

Lack of clear risk communication messages from the authorities resulted in low level of awareness within the communities of the virus transmission, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, which in turn led to biases against displaced Yemenis, refugees and migrants, as potential carriers of the virus, and furthermore potential risks for host communities, increasing the levels of discrimination and stigmatisation among these population groups. Given the already limited capacity of institutions to cope with the needs of host communities and displaced Yemeni, the competition for access to resources increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in relation to access to the COVID related items.

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<sup>156</sup> The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Yemen 2020

<sup>157</sup> The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Yemen 2020

### 3.6 Analysis of Compliance with International Human Rights, UN Norms & Standards

According to the Office of the High Commissioner, more than 8000 civilians have been killed and over 13,000 injured from the conflict and related causes (ERW – UXOs) since the escalation of the violence in 2015. Sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war in Yemen, with women (especially women activists), IDPs, migrants and refugees at greatest risk. The Security Council, in resolution 2511 (2020) affirmed that sexual violence in conflict could constitute a sanctionable act and a threat to peace, security or stability in Yemen<sup>158</sup>.

The Saudi-led coalition was delisted by the Secretary General for the violation of killing and maiming of children in 2020. The UN had verified 222 cases of killing and maiming of children attributed to the Coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, presented in the SG's 2020 annual report on children and armed conflict, in addition to 194 verified cases of killing and maiming of children in 2020 attributed to the Coalition. The UN verified 313 cases of killing and maiming attributed to Ansar Allah in 2019, and 255 in 2020, and the UN verified 96 cases of killing and maiming attributed to Yemen government forces in 2019 and 121 in 2020. Ansar Allah remains listed for the grave violations of recruitment and use, killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals, and the Yemen Government forces, including the Yemen Armed Forces remain listed for recruitment and use of children<sup>159</sup>.

The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen released a report in September 2020 that details scores of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. These include airstrikes that fail to abide by principles of distinction, proportionality and/or precaution, indiscriminate attacks using mortar shelling, recruitment and use of child soldiers, and unlawful killings at checkpoints. Other violations include the use of torture, including sexual violence in detention, denial of fair trial rights, the targeting of marginalized communities and the impeding of humanitarian operations, having a devastating effect of the ordinary lives of those in Yemen.

The Group also denounced the endemic impunity for those violations that fuels more abuses. The report titled '*Yemen: A Pandemic of Impunity in a Tortured Land*', which covers the period from July 2019 to June 2020, presented findings of the Group's investigation in a number of emblematic cases, focusing on events since July 2019. The Group also examined incidents that occurred as early as the beginning of the conflict in 2014, to shed light on certain categories of violations. In the report, the Group of Experts established that all parties to the conflict have continued to commit a range of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The Group reported "rampant levels of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, many of which may amount to war crimes", and claim that "for too many people in Yemen, there is simply no safe place to escape the ravages of the war"<sup>160</sup>.

Furthermore, the Group of Experts stressed that violations have been committed by all parties to the conflict: the Government of Yemen, Ansar Allah, the Southern Transitional Council, as well as members of the Coalition, in particular Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. "We are concerned that impunity continues largely unabated for those who perpetrate serious violations. While the Group has seen some progress in terms of investigations conducted by parties and some matters have been referred for criminal prosecution, to date no-one has been held accountable for the violations that the Group has identified.

<sup>158</sup> Sexual Violence in Conflict <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/yemen/>

<sup>159</sup> Reuters 2020 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-un/saudi-led-coalition-cut-from-u-n-blacklist-of-warring-parties-killing-children-idUSKBN23M2R7>

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26315&LangID=E>

Accountability is key to ensure justice for the people of Yemen". The Group of Experts called upon the Security Council to refer the situation in Yemen to the International Criminal Court, and to expand the list of persons subject to Security Council sanctions. The Group also expressed support for the creation of an international criminal justice investigation mechanism, and further discussions about the possibility of a specialized court to deal with the international crimes committed during the conflict in Yemen. The Group reiterated its call for third states to stop transferring arms to parties to the conflict given the role of such transfers in perpetuating the conflict and potentially contributing to violations.

### Commitment to International Human Rights and Conventions

Ratification Status for Yemen include:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1972)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (1984)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1987)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1987)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Degrading or Inhuman Treatment or Punishment (1991)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2000)
- Convention on the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) (2000)
- Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004)
- Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2007)
- Convention on Seafarers' Identity Documents (2008)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009)

In 2015, Government of Yemen established The National Commission to Investigate Alleged Violations to Human Rights (NCIAVHR), however the circumstances of its creation, among other factors, have only contributed to a perception of biased monitoring and reporting towards it. Also critically, since its establishment, the NCIAVHR, has been unable to officially access Ansar Allah controlled territory, and its investigations have predominantly targeted against Ansar Allah. In January 2019, Yemen was reviewed by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). It received 252 recommendations (and supported 201 recommendations<sup>161</sup>) at the adoption of its UPR outcome at Human Rights Council 41, in July 2019 (an increase of 21 percent with respect to the 2nd cycle). Following that UPR, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, commended the Government of Yemen for:

- Adopting policy to ensure men and women in public employment receive equal salary;
- Measures to protect children from early marriage including through the drafting of a bill defining the minimum age for marriage as 18 years;
- And the adoption of national strategies to protect the rights of the child, including a strategy to fight child recruitment and use and the establishment of a national commission to combat child trafficking.

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<sup>161</sup> Supported recommendations related to: Legal and general framework of implementation, universal and cross-cutting issues, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, women's rights, and rights of other vulnerable groups and persons.

However, Ms. Bachelet pushed for Yemen to “end the conflict, ensure respect for international human rights law, and international humanitarian law, especially the principles of proportionality, necessity and distinction and refrain from indiscriminate attacks and direct attacks against civilians”<sup>162</sup>. She pushed for Yemen to ratify the human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, including:

- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Degrading or Inhuman Treatment or Punishment, and
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Further, she encouraged Yemen to develop a comprehensive human rights action plan in coordination with all stakeholders to achieve concrete results in the specific areas listed in the annex to her letter. She also suggested Yemen establish a national mechanism for comprehensive reporting and follow up to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations. A series of recommendations made in her letter to the Yemeni Foreign Minister can be found in Annex A.

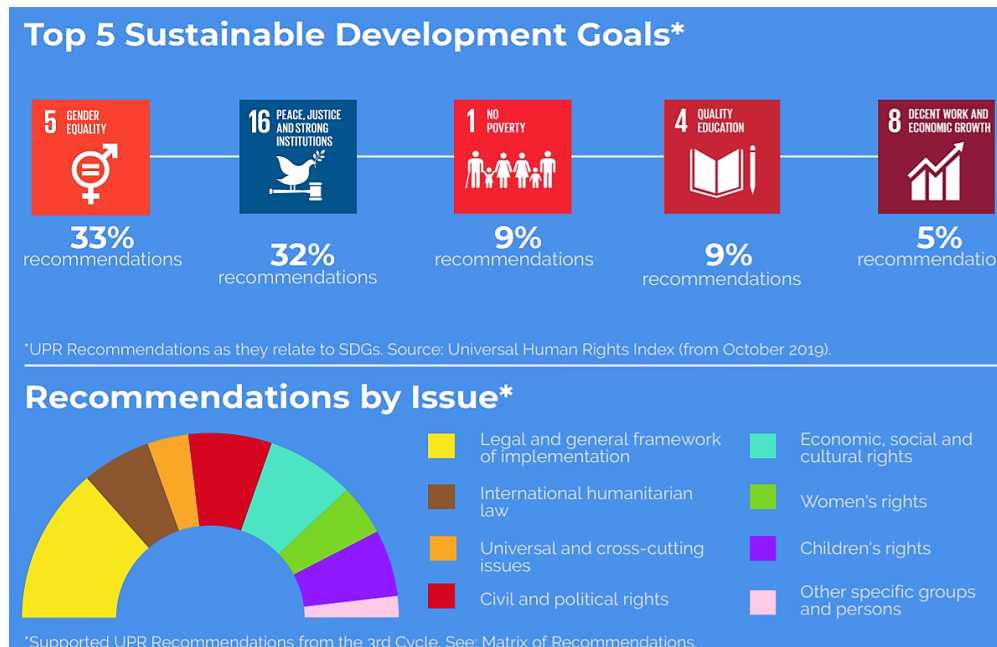


Figure 23. Infographic of recommendations following the third cycle of the UPR 2019.

### 3.6.1 Gender Equality and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The advancement of gender equality and women’s inclusion in Yemen is facing a complex set of challenges, and requires a comprehensive, long-term strategy to be implemented across a range of institutions and processes. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the 10 subsequent resolutions which make up the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda are legally binding and identify tangible and operational responsibilities and steps that states, regional institutions, and the international community must undertake to advance this agenda. Yet, on the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Yemen’s progress in implementing this agenda remains very limited although efforts are underway to recruit a national and international adviser to assist the Government of Yemen with NAP implementation.

<sup>162</sup> [https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/YE/HC\\_letter\\_Yemen\\_ENG.pdf](https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/YE/HC_letter_Yemen_ENG.pdf)

The timing for reviving the comprehensive implementation of the WPS Agenda has become even more critical due to the dire humanitarian crisis Yemen finds itself in today, which is further exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the gendered impact that the conflict has had on the country's population.<sup>163</sup>

The exclusive focus on women's representation and participation in formal negotiations needs to be strategically broadened to include efforts to influence all tracks, and there is a need for investments to be made into the often-neglected integration of gender perspectives for future peace agreements – starting with identifying and analyzing these perspectives and investing in tools to examine them and the gendered impacts of various outcomes of the Yemeni peace process (such as different forms of power-sharing, and ceasefire provisions).

### **3.6.2 Landmines and Explosive Ordinance**

Landmines continue to pose significant threats to the Yemeni population. The Ansar Allah forces have planted anti-personnel mines, improvised explosive devices (IED), and anti-vehicle mines primarily along the western coast of Yemen, which has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, and hindered aid to reach their targets. Landmines placed in farmlands, villages and roads also prevent the daily movement of civilians to fetch water and grow their crops. Landmines and naval mines have left at least three water facilities inaccessible on the western coast, and also poses significant threat to livestock and fishing opportunities, thus worsening the already dire level of food insecurity.

## **3.7 Development, Humanitarian and Peace Linkage Analysis**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embodies the long-standing dictum that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. The Agenda promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Sustaining peace is critical for achieving (and, in Yemen's case) restarting progress toward the SDGs. Inclusive participation, enhanced protection and engagement of women and young people, improved security and stability through peace-building, and building trust in the judicial system are a few ways this linkage can be strengthened in Yemen.

Although young people and women face significant obstacles to participating in politics and public life in Yemen today, these groups should be supported as important peace-builders. Given the large proportion of young people in Yemen, their active participation in political processes is crucial for the successful implementation of many resolutions and efforts to reduce and prevent violence and conflict. Enabling recovery and building resilience requires adopting and implementing a comprehensive and sustainable employment strategy to promote full, productive, freely chosen employment and decent work for women and men.

The inclusion of women in the broader peace process continues to be a challenge but there are examples of women in peace building, supporting community-level mediation and reconciliation, and contributing to social cohesion (especially in rural areas). Building on community respect for local women mediators, and bolstering them as role models, may lead to greater social appreciation and acceptance of women's engagement in the political and public spheres.

Rule-of-law institutions need strengthening. Support to the judiciary and the attorney-general constitutes a core element of addressing issues of injustice and insecurity. This supports the social contract and contributes to social cohesion with the aim to promote accountable, accessible justice sector institutions through technical and advisory

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<sup>163</sup> NOREF Women's Inclusion Report 2020



support. In light of the significant increase in gender-based and sexual violence, women's and girls' limited access to justice and security institutions needs to be addressed and mainstreamed into these engagements.<sup>164</sup>

Peace-building initiatives are needed to achieve mutual respect, tolerance, and social cohesion in respect of relationships marked by conflict and division. Coherence and understanding between communities, local institutions, tribal authorities, security forces, and militias must be improved – starting in local areas by investing in formal and informal conflict resolution modalities by relying on trusted mediators and councilors. It is important to support communities' ability to cope with insecurity and injustice by helping improve relations with police and security authorities and enhancing capacity to address community safety and security needs, as well as prioritising efficiently and respectfully. This requires an investment in sensitisation programmes and impact monitoring of adopted measures – adjusting them if necessary. Additionally, individual, and collective grievance redress systems and social accountability structures should be included in projects. Mechanisms require support and awareness raising to ensure that they take root in the community.

Ongoing conflict has led to institutional breakdown, and valuable national skills have been lost, making recovery more difficult. The lack of a national development agenda severely constrains donors' ability to move from humanitarian support toward long term development. Multi-level dialogue processes are critical in Yemen. Convening formal peace talks continues to be a challenge, highlighting the importance of dialogue promotion at various levels of society.

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<sup>164</sup> See for instance: "Integrating Women's Security Interests into Police Reform in Yemen."  
[https://www.academia.edu/3826119/Integrating\\_Womens\\_Security\\_Interests\\_into\\_Police\\_Reform\\_in\\_Yemen\\_Some\\_Suggestions\\_for\\_Structural\\_Reform\\_Arabic\\_English](https://www.academia.edu/3826119/Integrating_Womens_Security_Interests_into_Police_Reform_in_Yemen_Some_Suggestions_for_Structural_Reform_Arabic_English)

## 3.8 Financial Landscape Analysis

### 3.8.1 Yemen Aid Environment

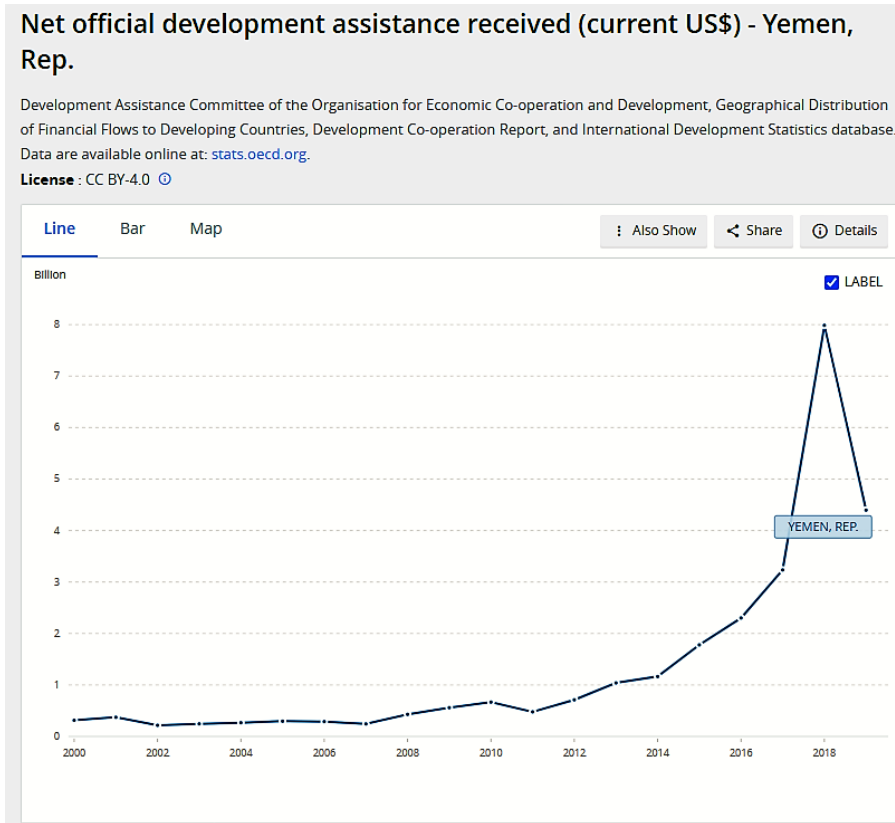


Figure 24. Net Official Development Assistance to Yemen since 2000 (Source: World Bank)

Yemen saw a steady gain in Official Development Assistance (ODA) over the last several decades. A significant boost in 2018 saw ODA reach its peak of almost 8 billion USD (comprising 35 percent of Yemen’s GNI, approximately \$280 per capita), before dropping in 2019. During 2015 – 2019, approximately USD 17.5 billion of ODA was disbursed. This averaged USD 3.5 billion a year compared to less than USD 1 billion a year before the conflict.

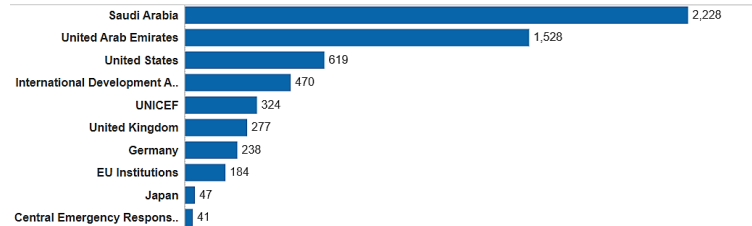
#### Receipts for Yemen

	2017	2018	2019
Net ODA (USD million)	3,234.0	7,985.3	4,396.5
Net ODA/GNI (%)	13.2	29.0	
Gross ODA (USD million)	3,316.3	8,107.5	4,475.2
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (%)	75.6	92.0	66.1
Total net receipts (USD million)	3,186.5	8,004.1	4,680.8

#### For reference

	2017	2018	2019
Population (million)	27.8	28.5	29.2
GNI per capita (Atlas USD)	970.0	940.0	

#### Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Yemen, 2018-2019 average, USD million



#### Bilateral ODA by Sector for Yemen, 2018-19 average

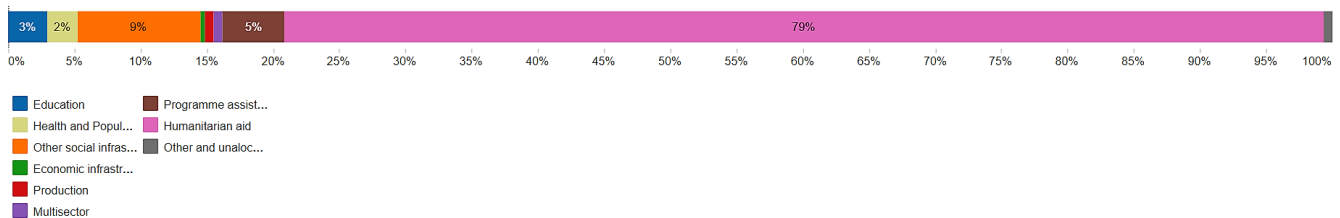


Figure 25. Breakdown of ODA in Yemen (Source: OECD.org)

Donors include a broad range of countries and institutions – uniquely attracting equal funding from OECD/DAC and GCC donors. ODA has been largely driven by humanitarian goals and assistance; however, 25 percent of ODA has gone to development over the period – much of which can be attributed to the WB and has remained relatively stable. Most ODA resources are disbursed by UN agencies with a humanitarian focus (e.g., WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, and UNFPA) and those who work primarily in development (e.g., UNDP, UNICEF, and FAO).

A few donors work with national institutions such as SFD and PWP and several work directly with communities and with local and international NGOs. Development donors are involved in a very broad range of sectors and in a multitude of projects. No detailed mapping exists – although one is being finalised by Germany – but an examination of programmes reveals a special concentration on social protection with some effort in livelihoods, health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture.

Since Yemen was declared by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to be a Level Three Emergency in 2015, funding for the humanitarian response increased year-on-year until 2019. In 2019, generous donor contributions allowed humanitarian agencies to mount one of the largest and fastest scale-ups of assistance in recent decades, expanding services and support across all clusters. More than 208 partners and agencies delivered assistance to an average of 13.7 million people per month in 2019 (up from 7.5 million people in 2018) and provided support in every single one of Yemen’s 333 districts. Millions of lives were saved and hundreds of thousands of families were provided with critical multi-sectoral assistance. As a result, the humanitarian community prevented large-scale famine and reversed the worst cholera outbreak in recent history.

A major reduction in funding in 2020 forced the closure or reduction of critical programmes and cut support to millions of people. Delivery of assistance fell from a high of reaching 13.7 million people per month in 2019 to a low of 7.5 million in June 2020, before picking up again at the end of 2020 to reach around 10 million people. Without adequate funding and comprehensive, integrated interventions, the impact on Yemenis and future generations is anticipated to be catastrophic<sup>165</sup>.

The UN-led humanitarian effort has been the largest global operation for several years and has shown a high level of innovation. The shrinking of international support comes at a time of increased COVID-19 needs and related macro-shocks. While the role of humanitarian aid is recognised, the international community has clearly indicated that it is unwilling to continue support at the current scale, implying that more sustainable approaches must be adopted. The implications of reduced funding mean less being delivered requiring sharper strategic prioritisation and accelerated re-orientation of existing development programmes toward more sustainable interventions, requiring advocacy around scaling-up development support. Donors will need to develop more adaptive responses in an uncertain environment that experiences external shocks, including adjusted activities to take account of COVID-19-related risks.

The cut in aid was felt directly in Yemen with UNHCR's operation only 30 percent funded, putting support for IDPs and refugees at risk. Support for UNICEF’s budget was reduced to 38 percent, putting 2.4 million children – including one-in-two children under the age of five – on the “the brink of starvation”. WASH services for 6 million people – including 3 million children and 400,000 of the most vulnerable IDPs – and water supply to nine major cities may

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<sup>165</sup> HRP 2020

be shut off completely in the coming weeks or months<sup>166</sup>. With the emergence of COVID-19, most population-based interventions have been put on hold for several months with an overall scaling down of humanitarian operations. As a result, over 10.4 million people were impacted by the reduction of assistance<sup>167</sup>.

The combination of increased needs and declining external humanitarian support poses a significant threat. The *Strategic Framework for an Immediate Response to COVID-19* report sets out a proposed strategy that would require annual external official assistance of approximately USD 3 – USD 4 billion. This demand compared to 2020-21 commitments creates a large financing gap of between USD 2 to 3 billion<sup>168</sup>, and external support is unlikely to fill this gap unless part of a more sustainable approach which combines strategies that address the immediate and structural dimensions of fragility, whilst at the same time finding more sustainable ways to provide assistance over the longer term. For this to happen, it is foreseen that local institutions will play a more central role, and donors will prioritise funds to improve the country's resilience, productivity, and sustainability<sup>169</sup>.

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<sup>166</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>167</sup> UNCT Report 2020

<sup>168</sup> And over the next 18 months, part of the needed additional financing must come as either balance of payment or budget allocations.

<sup>169</sup> SEF 2020

## 4. Conclusions

The analysis demonstrates that there is an urgent need to simultaneously provide life-saving humanitarian assistance while also addressing the worsening vulnerability of Yemenis that have been fueled by conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and extreme climatic events, and exacerbated by underlying development and governance deficits. There is a need to partner humanitarian assistance in Yemen with development and peacebuilding interventions. Next steps require development programming to take account of the different local and regional impacts of the conflict, with interventions tailored by region. There is demand for gender analysis and gender-responsiveness to be integrated across all planning and programming as a means to reduce decades-long gender inequality in Yemen. The most effective strategy considered to be one that is both multi-dimensional and phased. Tackling food security is an urgent requirement, while longer-term recovery will allow for greater resilience and sustainability.

Reconstruction and recovery efforts are considered immediate priorities, even while the conflict is ongoing. Reconstruction and economic recovery need to be intentionally designed and developed to integrate, promote, and advance gender equality and women's empowerment as a means to improve the dismal living conditions and lack of opportunities for most women and girls in Yemen. The reconstruction of Yemen needs also to transform the country for the benefit of all people, most particularly those at risk of being left behind, moving beyond a restoration of the status quo that might benefit only the elite. Development processes will have the greatest potential for sustainability if Yemenis and local institutions are involved from the planning stages forward to ensure legitimacy, local ownership, and accountability given local actors will be responsible for implementing these plans.

Urgent humanitarian interventions linked to Yemen's long-term economic recovery are also a priority. While the UN in Yemen will continue its humanitarian work amidst the conflict, a humanitarian focus alone will not address the root causes of the multitude of challenges facing the Yemeni people. As this analysis has illustrated, the greatest opportunity for building a sustainable and resilient Yemen into the future requires development and peace to be embedded as complementary elements into a strategic development approach which positions the HDPN at the core. Such an approach requires integration with work on the peace process, working with regional actors, bilateral and multilateral donors, and in close collaboration with the OSESGY, and gives the greatest opportunity to ensure that a peace process, if progressed, might result in ceasefire and final settlement provisions that take account of need to address food security and livelihood concerns, whilst at the same time ensuring that the way in which humanitarian assistance is provided does not undermine the political stability.

The UN's best opportunity to continue engagement in Yemen that meets all these priorities is through an integrated set of programming priorities that strengthen and make more inclusive the country's national and local governance structures, embeds an approach that aims to leave no one behind and addresses the needs of the most marginalised. Programming priorities would also best aim to set the country on a green and inclusive development path with a clear focus on tackling the root causes of the country's food insecurity crisis, supporting confidence building measures, national and local peace processes.

To strengthen the social contract and the agency of all Yemeni citizens, the UN could incorporate strategies that build capacity for citizen inclusion in decision-making processes and access to economic opportunities and social services. Among these are identified LNOB groups: women (especially women-headed households for IDPs and returnees), displaced groups (including returnees and IDPs), the Muhamasheen, and persons with disabilities.

Marginalised youth with limited social and economic opportunities should have access to alternative livelihoods, decent jobs and income opportunities to prevent their recruitment in armed conflicts and violence.

The Yemeni diaspora, private sector, and Civil Society Organisations should be engaged to ensure local priorities are voiced at regional and global discussions on recovery and reconstruction in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. A broad set of actors should be included in Yemen's recovery and reconstruction processes demonstrating that a whole-of-society focus is essential for peace negotiations and that long-term success will only happen if all Yemeni stakeholders join the peace negotiations.

#### 4.1 Cross-cutting Challenges & Opportunities

There is the need to improve data availability over time by removing current constraints. Actions would include new data collection that can improve future decision-making. Key to synchronising the data environment – especially social protection – is defining data and analysis requirements for strategic national level decision-making including demographic and population data needed for humanitarian cash transfers and social protection planning. The absence of any recent census makes it increasingly difficult to develop sampling weights in survey data – particularly considering the increased displacement of the population.

The use of big data techniques will be useful in such an environment to monitor progress in the implementation of specific programmes. Determining the difference between common data management approaches such as formats, interoperability, and security is needed, as well as agreement on joint commission of programmatic third-party monitoring and detailed impact assessments. It is also critical to strengthen and involve national statistical capacity such as the Central Statistics Office in Sana'a and Aden to prepare necessary population and demographic data to support the development of the social protection system<sup>170</sup>.

#### 4.2 Economic Structural Transformation Challenges & Opportunities

Reducing Yemen's reliance on imports and creating greater long-term sustainability will generate jobs that enable more people to have the income to purchase food and basic necessities and increasing food production in Yemen can reduce dependency on imports. This can be achieved in multiple ways including Investment in farms (livestock, agriculture, and fisheries) to develop local food production and enhance income generation, as well as investment in infrastructure and services to support these farms (such as finance, seed banks, veterinary services, community-level water and solar power irrigation projects, food storage, improvement of land management practices). Alternatives to qat need to be explored as a means of saving water.

Diversifying the economy and increasing hard currencies needed for imports can be supported by investing in the export production capacities of export value chains including coffee, honey, and fish. Restrictions on trade in basic commodities such as fuel, food and essential equipment for local industry should be eased to encourage domestic economic growth. Cash for work programmes can support livelihoods with immediate cash injections, while public works projects, such as building or restoring infrastructure, can create employment and generate decent jobs, increase incomes, and improve the environment for economic development. Productive Employment and Decent Work will bring people out of poverty and enhance the purchasing power of communities.

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<sup>170</sup> SEF 2020

Moving from low value-adding activities to more complex industries is a difficult journey for many companies, particularly for MSMEs. These firms often only have limited access to capital and knowledge and rely on targeted assistance in technology transfer to manage the transition successfully. Yemen should invest in building the capacities of public organizations to sufficiently assist companies during the process. Moreover, technological upgrading is not possible without the presence of an adequately skilled workforce. Thus, industrial skill development is needed.

Reducing the cost of financing and transporting food are key strategies toward solving the supply issue, especially in the north, and will lower food prices, thereby dismantling a key element of the war economy. Key to achieving this is the opening up and rehabilitation of ports at Al Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Issa and of Aden and Mukalla. Sana'a airport if reopened along with rehabilitation of roads to enable unimpeded internal mobility, will facilitate trade by lowering the cost of consumer goods and increasing the security of traders and their products.

Advocacy is needed for joint monitoring, verification and inspections mechanisms based in Yemen (rather than in Jeddah and Djibouti, as currently). Action to lower the war-risk insurance costs for food importers is also required. To provide food importers improved access to capital, the Government of Yemen will need to be supported in addressing anti-corruption and transparency reforms around the previous use of the Saudi deposit through the letter of credit scheme.

Increasing macro-economic stability, including stabilizing the YER, will make imports and exports easier and reduce the cost of doing business in Yemen. If inflation can be reduced to single digits, consumer prices could be stabilized, allowing for rehabilitation of the financial sector, stabilizing household incomes, and boosting local demand. Achieving this will require de-escalating economic warfare between Ansar Allah and the Government of Yemen, reducing double taxation and gaining agreement to a system for fuel imports and use of related revenues.

Support will be required to ensure greater transparency withing the central bank, alignment of monetary policy and re-establishment of a single currency. Predictable payment of salaries for public servants is needed and support is required to develop a sustainable development financing model. Additionally, the Government of Yemen needs support in developing banking sector regulation so that Yemen can be removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list of countries that have been identified as having Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF) deficiencies. This long-term effort would help Yemeni banks reconnect with the international banking system and access accounts and foreign currency frozen abroad and create safer and more efficient pathways for remittance transfers.

### 4.3 Environmental Challenges and Opportunities

Responding to climate change requires coordination between communities across a larger affected geographic area (e.g., for watershed issues). Mitigation and adaptation measures require a clear understanding of the climate change patterns forecast to devise interventions that should be long term but should also start as soon as possible. However, there is little ability and/or instruments to achieve progress in this field in the short term. The demand for clean water for public health and human consumption have increased during COVID-19, which is also needed to combat and treat COVID-19.

Increased demand for domestic water and water for healthcare settings could lead to trade-offs both downstream (in wastewater production) and upstream (in competing demands for supplies from agriculture and other sectors).

Diverting water from agriculture for use in cities may affect food production, while maintaining agricultural water may mean that cities do not have adequate supplies to combat the pandemic.

As such, water governance is necessary to sustain the water infrastructure since it needs annual maintenance and proper management. To some extent, however, it may be different when it comes to the treatment of climate affected IDPs as their large-scale displacement has put considerable pressure on available, but limited, services. With limited cash and in-kind forms of support available, IDPs are one of the most marginalised groups in Yemen and the climate change impact on them has been significant<sup>171</sup>. Climate change is a driving factor behind an increasing number of IDPs and refugees, which causes greater internal mobility and fast-growing urbanisation, increasing the pressure on basic services, housing, and the potential for conflict<sup>172</sup>.

In the short to medium term, environmental resilience, and water management such as extending renewable, off-grid, energy interventions – including affordable solar products – to support COVID-19 health services could be improved. To respond to climate change and its impacts on the long term, focused preventive planning could include enhanced disaster risk reduction and/or management such as a national observatory linked to international facilities.

Disaster risk reduction strategies must be based on a clear study of the climate change patterns and of the ground and surface water resources to develop a resilient national plan. Strategies for sustainable agriculture and water use – ideally at watershed levels – must be integrated into public works programmes. Communities and local authorities should be involved and empowered to respond in climate change preparedness and recovery – including resilience building responses – while addressing the impact of climate change on displacement.

Steps taken to prevent or effectively deal with this are likely to be slowed by increased funding and mobility constraints. Urgent efforts are needed to address mass returns and solutions must be sensitive to the reality that households displaced by climate change are often unable to return to their areas of origin. IDP protection needs must be determined to inform interventions, but dedicated investments are needed for livelihood support and income generation (housing, labour market, and social integration) as well as social protection. There must also be an investment in local peacebuilding efforts involving climate change-affected IDPs and local community relations, as well as equitable and peaceful sharing of resources in displacement-affected communities, to encourage efficient resource management and usage<sup>173</sup>.

With approximately 60 percent of the population dependent upon natural resource-based livelihoods and given that most IDPs originate from rural areas, mainstreaming climate risks into the development response is essential for resilient recovery. Frequent and severe climatic disasters, increased water insecurity, heightened fragility in food production, and continued land degradation will necessitate Yemen to boost adaptation measures and improve their natural resource management practices.

It is important to protect and promote the recovery of agricultural livelihoods with a focus on the rehabilitation of water infrastructure and the socioeconomic inclusion of displaced populations by organizing joint cash-for-work activities that bring together IDPs, returnees and host communities. Supporting local Water User Associations (WUAs) within which women play an active role in preventing and resolving local water-related conflicts is

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<sup>171</sup> SEF 2020

<sup>172</sup> UNDP CSN

<sup>173</sup> SEF 2020



important. This opportunity to contribute to the economic life of their host communities empowers IDPs to regain their self-confidence and economic independence while contributing to strengthening community-level social cohesion.

Increasing access to water through the rehabilitation of water infrastructure and the use of highly efficient methods of utilizing irrigation water – such as modern irrigation systems and improved water conveyance systems – will contribute to relieving pressure on groundwater resources and have enabled the diversion of water for domestic use which has witnessed increasing demand during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4.4 Social & Institutional Challenges & Opportunities

Emergency food and cash assistance will save lives by meeting immediate priority needs and ensure greater sustainability by improving the capacity of the humanitarian response in Yemen to deliver aid in a way that strengthens the foundations for recovery. A deep-dive mapping exercise of the political economy in Yemen could help inform this work - it would identify key interests and ideas shaping the current financing, provision and delivery of food aid; current beneficiaries of the current system (both within and outside of Yemen), who are the decision-makers, local gatekeepers and champions for change; and potential for reform. All parties should be engaged, especially Ansar Allah, to resolve access issues and increase ability to reach areas most in need. It is especially critical in this work to keep LNOB groups at the forefront of assistance delivery.

As the UN in Yemen works collaboratively to meet the overwhelming needs of Yemenis, the most vulnerable, including women, children, IDPs and persons with disabilities must be prioritized, human rights must be paramount, and gender analysis and gender equality promotion must be mainstreamed into all programs. Yemeni women and youth should participate in and help to influence the peace and security processes in Yemen. There is a need to support and promote Women's leadership, including in COVID-19 response and recovery and by advancing women and youth's participation in peacebuilding.

The documentation and verification of reported incidents of all rights violations must continue and psychosocial support must be provided to the most affected. Civil society should be supported in assisting victims of human rights violations; and community awareness on human rights and referral mechanisms should be promoted. All parties to the conflict should be engaged to ensure a principled and accountable humanitarian response in accordance with the four guiding humanitarian principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and Independence.

The UN in Yemen should continue to strengthen the humanitarian, peace, and development nexus by focusing on local service delivery and empowered communities; transforming the economy for stability and peace; and petitioning for an inclusive peace process. Preserving the existing institutions such as health facilities from total collapse will be important to facilitate recovery when the crisis ends.

This CCA has aimed to outline the root causes of the current crisis in Yemen. It cannot be overstated just how dire the situation is with circumstances worsening daily. The fragility of the political structure and conflict, the collapsed economy, increased food and fuel prices, import restrictions, and COVID-19 have had a devastating impact on human development in Yemen. An urgent integrated approach to development assistance is required before the already-staggering death toll rises further, and phased efforts are needed to bring Yemen back onto a path toward the 2030 Agenda if the country is to avoid catastrophic human suffering.

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# Annex 1 - Yemeni legislation & international commitments relevant to gender justice

## Constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination:

- The 1991 Yemeni constitution is mentioned in the Government of Yemen's NAP as the legal basis for gender equality in Yemen. However, since the unification of Yemen in 1990 women's groups have pointed out that legal gender-based inequalities were systematised in the constitution. In the NAP, Article 27 is referenced as a provision that stresses equal gender rights and non-discrimination. This does not, however, take into consideration amended versions and the deterioration of explicit provisions that are designed to ensure non-discrimination. As the second shadow report on the implementation in Yemen of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) points out, in 1994 this article was replaced with Article 41 of the amended Yemeni constitution from which the explicit reference to non-discrimination was removed. Further, Article 31, which stipulates that all men and women have rights guaranteed in accordance with Islamic law, is also referenced in the NAP. The risk lies in varying interpretations of such law, which in turn provides leeway for religious authorities to increase inequalities based on extremist interpretations of sharia law.
- Constitutional principles of inclusion and implicit mention of women's rights were reflected in the 2014 NDC outcomes document (NDC, 2014). This included a proposal that the federal constitution should promote equality and seek to achieve a minimum of 30 percent women's representation across state institutions and elected councils. It further proposed the introduction of protection mechanisms for women, and stressed the need for their inclusion in conflict resolution and transitional justice programmes, and the gender specificity of women's needs and experiences.
- The 2015 draft Yemeni constitution includes articles that enshrine women's rights and equality. Article 128 states that "Women have full rights and shall be empowered and protected by the State and laws" (Constitutional Drafting Committee, 2015).

## Political participation:

- The Yemeni General Elections and Referendum Law No. 13 of 2001 includes no discriminatory conditions for candidacy for various councils and authorities. Nonetheless, the lack of quotas and enforced inclusion mechanisms renders women's inclusion at top decision-making levels extremely limited. For example, as the Government of Yemen NAP notes, only two women sit in the House of Representatives, compared to 299 men, and only two women occupy ministerial positions, compared to 35 men.
- The Law of Parties and Political Organisations No. 66 of 1991 limits political party membership to Yemeni citizens with Yemeni fathers. No quotas for female participation in political parties and their leaderships are imposed.

## Personal status laws:

- Yemeni personal status and family laws include discriminatory provisions that consequently reinforce patriarchal private and public power structures. National laws such as the Citizenship Law No. 6 of 1990 allow Yemeni women to pass nationality on to their children, but discriminate by not allowing women to pass their nationality on to their foreign spouses. There is also no legislation stipulating a minimum marriage age, thus

exacerbating the phenomenon of early and forced marriage that flourishes in an unregulated environment. Further, according to the UN Development Programme, women do not enjoy equal rights in all or most aspects of marriage and divorce, as well as in inheritance- and guardianship-related matters.

Penal Code:

- Crimes and Penal Code No. 12 of 1994: Certain provisions in the Yemeni Penal Code criminalise sexual violence such as rape, for which there are severe penalties that can include capital punishment. However, national domestic violence laws are lacking, and some provisions provide leniency for sexual violence committed by male perpetrators; for example, Article 232 provides a mitigated penalty for a man who kills his wife for adultery.

International laws and conventions:

- Yemen has ratified CEDAW without reservations. Nonetheless, specific national legislation for the protection of women against sexual violence and domestic abuse is lacking. The government of Yemen has also yet to ratify CEDAW's optional protocol that legally enforces CEDAW commitments.
- The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergencies and Armed Conflicts was adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 3318 (D.29) of December 14th 1974.
- Similarly, the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) were approved by the UN General Assembly on December 21st 2010.
- Other relevant international conventions and protocols that Yemen has ratified are the International Convention on Women's Political Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>174</sup>.

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<sup>174</sup> NOREF Women's Inclusion Report 2020

## Annex 2 - Human Rights Recommendations

Full list of recommendations made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, to the Government of Yemen, following the third Universal Periodic Review in 2019.

### **Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies**

- Ratifying the human rights instruments to which Yemen is not yet a party, particularly the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- Complying with obligations under international humanitarian law, especially the principles of proportionality, necessity and distinction, and refraining from indiscriminate attacks and direct attacks against civilians.

### **National human rights framework**

- Continuing to provide support to the Yemeni National Commission to investigate human rights allegations and provide the necessary resources.

#### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

##### *Equality and non-discrimination*

- Strengthening awareness-raising programmes of human rights in order to promote equal rights and equality of opportunity for all citizens in accordance with Yemeni legislation.
- Intensifying efforts to eradicate all acts of discrimination against minorities living in Yemen, and to ensure that equal treatment is guaranteed to all individuals without exception.

#### **B. Civil and political rights**

##### *Right to life, liberty and security of person*

- Intensifying efforts to end the conflict and to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
- Facilitating unhindered humanitarian access to its territory in order to facilitate the delivery of essential goods, including food and medicine.
- Imposing a moratorium on the death penalty and ensuring that the death penalty is not imposed on persons under the age of 18.
- Taking concrete steps to protect journalists, human rights defenders, civil society and minorities from arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture.
- Ceasing the practice of arbitrary detention and torture in places of detention.

##### *Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*

- Conducting prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into reports of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
- Intensifying efforts to support the independence of the judiciary and promote its capacities and mandate.



*Persons with disabilities*

- Continuing to improve the quality and scope of the conditions for persons with disabilities.

*Minorities*

- Halting all forms of persecutions against religious minorities, particularly those affiliated with the Baha'.
- Protecting the practice of religion and Christian minority groups against threats and acts of violence.

*Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons*

- Enacting laws and policies that ensure unrestricted access to asylum, and protect the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, including by ensuring oversight by relevant bodies and institutions;
- Enhancing the protection of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers from violence and exploitation and intensifying efforts to implement the roadmap on the protection of internally displaced persons.