

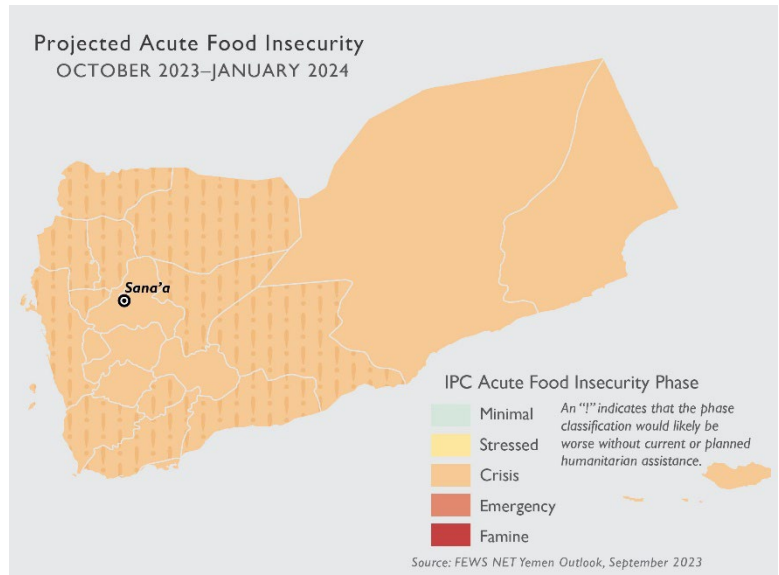
# Yemen – Complex Emergency

JANUARY 8, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- Al Houthi hostilities toward maritime transport in the Red Sea since mid-November continue to escalate and prompt transportation companies to reroute ships, according to international media. The disruption of the flow of commercial goods has also resulted in increased costs of food and fuel across Yemen, FAO reports.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases, including cholera, rose in Yemen in 2023, exacerbating health and WASH needs for displaced populations across the country.
- UNICEF conducted the first national survey that assessed the living conditions of women and children since 2013 as humanitarian organizations aim to prioritize assistance for the most at-risk populations in 2024.



Note: FY 2024 funding for the Yemen Complex Emergency will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on the U.S. Government (USG)'s funding toward the response in FY 2023, refer to Yemen Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #12 released on September 29, 2023, available on the USAID website at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work>.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### **Al Houthi Maritime Hostilities Disrupt Supply Chains, Increase Cost of Food and Fuel**

Al Houthi hostilities in the Red Sea have continued to escalate since November 19, when Al Houthi authorities seized a cargo ship in transit, prompting transportation companies to reroute ships and increase the cost of insurance for commercial shippers moving through the Red Sea due to the heightened risk of drone attacks and ship seizures, international media report. The highly import-dependent nature of Yemen's economy means that disruption of commercial trade will likely lead to decreased imports, including food, to Yemeni ports and higher prices of basic food commodities, further reducing household purchasing power, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Humanitarian supplies continued entering through Yemeni ports as of early January; however, ongoing disruptions may result in global price hikes as an estimated 12 percent of the world's trade passes through the Red Sea, including food commodities such as grain and palm oil, the UN reports.

Insecurity in the Red Sea has also constrained oil shipping and prompted increases in the cost of fuel. Prior to the recent hostilities, more than 6 million barrels of oil passed daily through the Bab el Mandeb Strait, a critical route for global commodity shipments connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, according to international media. In Republic of Yemen Government (RoYG)-controlled areas of the country, the price of fuel increased by nearly 20 percent between October and December 2023, FAO reports. According to international nongovernmental organization (INGO) ACAPS, which reported a further increase in the price of oil resulting from insecurity in the Red Sea, hostilities could lead to additional power outages and reductions in the provision of social services in RoYG-held areas, where residents have experienced prolonged power outages since July. To counter increased Al Houthi hostilities and safeguard commercial traffic in the Red Sea, the U.S. Department of Defense announced the establishment of Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational security initiative, on December 18. More than 20 countries had joined the coalition as of December 28, according to international media.

### **Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Rise in Yemen, Particularly Among Children**

A cholera outbreak in Yemen continued to worsen in late 2023, spreading to 12 governorates across Yemen between mid-October and early December, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As of December 17, the Health and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) clusters<sup>1</sup> had recorded more than 890 cholera cases and six associated deaths since mid-October, with IOM recording 14 cholera-related deaths between January and early December. Notably, migrants and other displaced populations remain particularly vulnerable to cholera due to their lack of access to health care and WASH services, limited availability of diagnosis and testing services, and poor WASH conditions in displacement sites and host communities. While neither RoYG nor Al Houthi authorities had declared an official outbreak as of early January 2024, humanitarian actors continue to face challenges in responding to cholera due to a shortage of resources and lack of funding. In addition, language barriers, negative health stigma, and poor access to health services among civilians negatively affect case detection and treatment, the European Commission's Department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) reports.

Meanwhile, cases of other vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles and rubella, rose in Yemen throughout 2023, with a measles outbreak at an internally displaced person (IDP) site in southern Yemen's Ibb Governorate resulting in more than 20 confirmed cases and one related death during

<sup>1</sup> The coordinating bodies for humanitarian health and WASH activities, respectively, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

September, according to the UN. A lack of awareness among parents and caregivers on the importance of vaccinations contributed to the spread of measles in the IDP site. In addition, limited access to services—including adequate health care and proper sanitation—and poor living conditions in the affected displacement site continue to place the overcrowded population at higher risk of spreading communicable diseases. Overall, the Ministry of Public Health and Population recorded nearly 60,000 confirmed cases of measles and 568 measles-related deaths in Yemen between January 1 and November 30. The surge in cases, particularly among children, is largely due to the disruption of vaccination campaigns due to insecurity and the lack of adequate access to health care services in Al Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, the UN notes. Notably, nearly 30 percent of children ages 12–23 months across Yemen had not received any vaccinations as of May 2023, according to the UN Children Fund’s (UNICEF) November 2023 Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). To curb the spread of disease outbreaks, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) and other health actors, including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) partners, are scaling up vaccine awareness-raising activities and routine vaccination campaigns across the country.

### **UNICEF Launches First National Needs Survey Since 2013 Amid Plans for Increased Humanitarian Prioritization**

In cooperation with the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), which operates from its two hubs based in Aden and Sana’a, UNICEF released the results of the MICS—the first national survey assessing countywide humanitarian needs since 2013 and the most recent MICS survey completed in Yemen since 2006—on November 24. The survey, which included data from more than 20,000 households across all of Yemen’s 22 governorates from July 2022 to May 2023, assessed the living conditions of women and children to inform humanitarian and development planning and enable relief actors to better target assistance. The findings revealed that multi-sectoral needs, particularly nutrition, persist among women and children. Among children ages 6–23 months, approximately 40 percent received the minimum recommended meal frequency, an estimated 10 percent received the minimum recommended dietary diversity, and only 7 percent received the minimum acceptable diet, according to the survey. In addition, two governorates—Al Jawf and Socotra Island—reported that fewer than 1 percent of children received the minimum acceptable diet and diet diversity during the reporting period.

Meanwhile, according to preliminary figures from the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen, an estimated 18.2 million people—approximately 63 percent of whom live in Al Houthi-controlled areas—will require humanitarian assistance in Yemen in 2024, the UN reports. The 2024 projections represent a nearly 16 percent decrease from the 21.6 million people in need calculated for 2023, largely due to the absence of large-scale conflict, implementation of effective humanitarian responses, greater freedom of movement, and increased flow of commercial and fuel imports throughout 2023. According to the 2024 Global Humanitarian Overview released by the UN in December, humanitarian actors plan to target approximately 11.2 million of the 18.2 million people in need in Yemen in 2024 as part of an effort to achieve a more prioritized response focused on the most urgent humanitarian needs. Prioritization remains critical in ensuring the humanitarian response is reflective of Yemen’s evolving needs, including greater cooperation with development actors.

## KEY FIGURES



**5.2 Million**

People in Yemen reached with WFP general food assistance in November 2023



**16**

USG partners supporting health interventions



**6**

USG partners supporting MPCA programming



**14**

USG partners supporting nutrition programming

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### FOOD SECURITY

To address acute food insecurity in Yemen, USAID/BHA supports the UN World Food Program (WFP) and seven NGOs to implement food assistance activities. USAID/BHA partners are providing emergency food assistance through in-kind food aid, including U.S.-sourced commodities, and cash and vouchers for individuals to buy food in local markets. With USAID/BHA and other donor support, WFP reached more than 5.2 million people with in-kind food assistance and approximately 17,700 people with cash-based transfers in November.

### HEALTH

The USG supports IOM, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, and 12 NGOs to conduct life-saving health interventions in Yemen. USG partners provide primary health care services—in conjunction with nutrition and WASH programming—through static health facilities and mobile medical teams serving hard-to-reach areas throughout Yemen. USG partners also support local health volunteers to provide health services at the community level, thereby promoting better health outcomes. In addition, USAID/BHA partners equip health facilities with medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to expand access to quality medical services. In November, a USAID/BHA NGO partner provided health assistance in Marib and Shabwah governorates, reaching nearly 4,200 individuals with outpatient health consultations and treatment for communicable and non-communicable diseases. The partner also provided antenatal care to nearly 130 women and postnatal care to more than 90 caregivers and babies during the month.

### MPCA

With USG support, IOM, UNHCR, and three NGOs provide multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to conflict-affected households in Yemen to meet their basic needs and reduce the use of negative coping strategies, while also supporting local markets. By providing MPCA, USG partners enable households to procure cooking gas, food, hygiene items, and other essential commodities. With support from USAID/BHA, an NGO partner provided nearly 5,000 households with cash assistance in September. USAID/BHA partners distribute MPCA to vulnerable households, including conflict-affected, newly displaced, and other vulnerable households, to help meet basic needs and develop linkages with longer-term programming.

### NUTRITION

USAID/BHA-supported nutrition assistance aims to identify, prevent, and treat wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—across Yemen. Through support for UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and 11 NGOs, USAID/BHA helps reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant and lactating women (PLW). USAID/BHA partners

provide nutrition support through health clinics and mobile health teams by integrating health, nutrition, and WASH interventions to comprehensively assist vulnerable populations. USAID/BHA also supports the nutrition stock pipeline for moderate or severe acute malnutrition cases. During November, a USAID/BHA partner supported health facilities in Ta'izz Governorate to screen more than 1,500 children ages five years and younger and nearly 430 PLW for acute malnutrition, referring them for specialized treatment as needed.



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USG partners supporting protection interventions

## PROTECTION

The USG is responding to critical protection needs across Yemen through support to IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, and six NGOs. Through community mobilization activities, risk mitigation efforts, and specialized case management services, USG partners address child protection and psychosocial support (PSS) needs, prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and respond to other protection risks and violations. In November, a USAID/BHA NGO partner reached approximately 380 children with PSS activities through structured sessions and group activities and conducted 16 awareness-raising sessions on child protection, targeting an estimated 230 individuals in Ta'izz.



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USG partners supporting WASH interventions

## WASH

The USG supports IOM, UNICEF, and 16 NGOs to expand access to safe drinking water and prevent and respond to communicable disease outbreaks in Yemen. USG partners conduct critical WASH interventions, including distributing hygiene kits, promoting improved hygiene practices, providing water trucking services, and rehabilitating water systems damaged by conflict, for IDPs and other at-risk populations across Yemen. In response to the recent cholera outbreak, USAID/BHA health partners have continued to conduct critical WASH activities and coordinate vaccine campaigns across the country. With USG and other donor support, IOM reached nearly 31,000 individuals with hygiene promotion activities, including the distribution of more than 4,700 hygiene kits, during 2023. The UN agency also conducted water trucking and water quality monitoring activities, benefiting nearly 36,000 individuals, during the same period.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Between mid-2004 and early 2005, conflict between the RoYG and Al Houthi opposition forces in northern Yemen generated widespread and repeated displacement and exacerbated humanitarian needs. The southward advance of Al Houthi forces in 2014 and 2015 expanded the scope of the armed conflict, further aggravating the humanitarian crisis. In March 2015, a Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)-led coalition began conducting airstrikes against Al Houthi and allied forces to halt Al Houthi southward expansion, damaging and destroying public infrastructure, interrupting essential services, and reducing commercial imports to a fraction of the levels required to sustain the Yemeni population.
- A UN-brokered truce between Al Houthi authorities and the KSA-led coalition from April through October 2022 resulted in a significant reduction in conflict that has persisted; however, the situation on the ground remains fragile and humanitarian needs remain high due to the economic crisis, high levels of unemployment, protracted instability, and rising food and fuel prices. Approximately 21.6 million people require humanitarian assistance, including approximately 13.4 million people in acute need, according to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview. Moreover, approximately 4.5 million people remain internally displaced in the country since 2015, while an additional 1.3 million IDPs have returned to their areas of origin. The volatility of the current situation has impeded relief agencies' ability to obtain accurate, comprehensive demographic data on conflict-affected populations.
- On October 9, 2023, U.S. Ambassador Steven H. Fagin redeclared a disaster for Yemen for FY 2024 due to continued humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency and the impact of the country's economic and political crises on vulnerable populations.

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## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)