Conflict in Yemen
Update and funding request
November 2015

PEOPLE AFFECTED
21.1 million affected by conflict
15.2 million in need of healthcare
2.3 million internally displaced
5798 deaths
27,478 injuries

HEALTH SECTOR
23% of health facilities have ceased to function
407 confirmed cases of measles
9469 cases of dengue fever
500,000 children suffering from life-threatening malnutrition

BENEFICIARIES REACHED
1,721,471 people have benefitted from consultations conducted with WHO assistance. **

4.6 million children under the age of five were vaccinated against polio in November 2015.

71 health facilities have been supported with medicines, medical supplies and equipment and fuel.

119,000 litres of fuel have been provided to support hospital generators and ambulances.

WHO FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
Funding request: US$ 83 million
Received: US$ 37 million
Funding gap: 55%

** Consultations reported by eDEWS, do not include beneficiaries of kits or other interventions

At a glance
- Continuing conflict may result in the complete collapse of Yemen’s health system.
- More than 15.2 million people lack access to health services.
- For the past 10 months, partners have been increasingly reliant on the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the sole providers of medical supplies in the country.

Situation update
The intensification of conflict in Yemen since March 2015 has pushed Yemen’s already weakened health system to the brink of collapse. Insecurity, power shortages and a lack of fuel (for generators and ambulances) have led to the closure of almost one in four health facilities. Not only are health workers among the 2.3 million people displaced, but the procurement and distribution of medicines and medical supplies has been disrupted. In addition, economic factors are taking a toll on the Ministry of Health’s ability to fund the continued operation of health facilities and individuals’ ability to pay to access them.

As a result, 15.2 million people currently lack access to health care and the conflict looks unlikely to abate any time soon. A one-two punch of successive cyclones has also added to the strain, displacing an extra 44,000 people and increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria.

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Public health concerns

Treatment for conflict-related injuries is an immediate concern. As the crisis progresses, however, other health needs are mounting.

For example, the Yemeni population is facing increasing difficulties in accessing care for chronic non-communicable conditions such as cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. While some of these conditions are easily treatable under normal circumstances, if left untreated, the consequences can be deadly. In fact, non-communicable diseases account for 39% of all deaths in Yemen.

Women and children are also particularly vulnerable under current circumstances. Before the current crisis, 92% of women surveyed in 2013 reported having at least one obstacle to accessing health care. According to the 2013 Yemen Health and Demographic Survey, the maternal mortality ratio was 148 maternal deaths per 100 000 births.

More than 500 000 children suffer from life-threatening malnutrition, and are increasingly susceptible to communicable diseases like measles and polio. And, as the violence continues, mental health needs are on the rise for everyone.

Yet the crisis has not reached its peak. There is no political solution to the current conflict in sight. And, with 20 million people lacking access to safe water and sanitation, conditions are ripe for a major disease outbreak.

Key public health concerns:

- Significant gaps in the provision of health care
- Disruption to supplies of medicines and medical equipment
- Disruption of treatment for patients with chronic illnesses
- Increasing death rates among mothers and children
- Rising mental health needs
- Increased need for surgical intervention and rehabilitation for conflict-related injuries
- Growing risk of communicable diseases
Health Cluster priorities in Yemen

WHO is working to support the Ministry of Health in coordinating the efforts of 22 partner agencies to meet the health needs of people affected by the ongoing conflict. Together, the Health Cluster in Yemen aims to reach 10.3 million of the country’s most vulnerable people with much-needed health assistance.

Current Health Cluster priorities include:

- Providing medical supplies and equipment, including for the treatment of critical cases of non-communicable diseases.
- Vaccinating against diseases including measles, rubella and polio.
- Preventing vector-borne diseases, such as malaria.
- Delivering integrated primary health care, including mental health services.
- Supporting treatment of conflict-related injuries (e.g. through the deployment of surgical teams and supplies).
- Supporting mobile clinics and outreach services for reproductive, maternal and newborn child health.
- Strengthening disease surveillance and outbreak response.

WHO key achievements

Perhaps WHO’s greatest achievement in 2015 has been the Organization’s delivery of medical supplies and fuel for health facilities into the country. For the past ten months, WHO has been almost the only provider of medicines and medical supplies, distributing 300 tonnes of life-saving goods to the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and NGOs.

In addition, WHO has:

- Conducted fumigation campaigns to protect 250 000 people from dengue fever.
- Provided intravenous (IV) fluids to treat 300 000 people.
- Supported 71 health facilities with medicines, medical supplies and equipment.
- Delivered 119 000 litres of fuel to maintain uninterrupted health services in hospitals and health facilities, and to support ongoing ambulance services.
- Procured nutritional supplements and paediatric medicines for therapeutic feeding centres.
- Supported improvements to water and sanitation infrastructure at health facilities. This includes the delivery of more than 300 000 water purification tablets between August and October.
- Trained 28 individuals from Abyan, Amanat Al Asimah and Sa’ada in water testing.

Photo right and above right: Polio teams travel from house to house, vaccinating every child under the age of five. Credit: WHO/M. Bamozahem

WHO and the Health Cluster in brief:

- The crisis in Yemen was declared a Grade 3 emergency on 1 July 2015.
- The Health Cluster is co-chaired by WHO and has 22 active Health Cluster partners.
- WHO has sub-national offices in Aden and Hodeida.
How Member States can help

Health services in Yemen are at their breaking point. Unless the health system receives sufficient support, immediately, it could collapse completely.

Member States can play a role in minimizing the health consequences of the crisis in Yemen through the following actions:

- Provision of additional funding to WHO and our Health Cluster partners.
- Deployment of medical teams and technical expertise.
- Advocacy for the protection of health workers, health facilities and transport.
- Advocacy for the unrestricted delivery of medical supplies into the country.

Visit www.who.int/disasters for more information about WHO’s work in humanitarian emergencies