

Executive Summary

Yemen:

Immediate-To-Short Term Actions to Improve the Humanitarian Situation

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The current conflict has greatly exacerbated pre-existing problems and Yemen's dependency on international aid and assistance. The main humanitarian challenges that have been directly linked to the current conflict, other than the death of civilians due to military operations, include:

- 1. Food security and risk of famine.** According to the WFP, 60 percent of the population is food insecure. Of those, 8.4 million individuals risk starvation, with an estimated 462,000 children suffering from 'severe acute malnutrition'. The main challenges include:
 - Supply disruptions due to import restrictions;
 - Transportation issues due to insecurity, lack of fuel and local bureaucracies;
 - Diminishing purchasing power of population due to inflation and lack of salary; and
 - Difficulties making financial transactions due to liquidity problems and bureaucracy.
- 2. Collapsing public institutions and disruption of basic services.** According to available reports, foreign exchange reserves dropped from US\$4.7 billion (2014) to less than US\$1 billion (2016). More than one million public employees have not been paid for over a year, impacting on the purchasing power of close to 50 percent of the Yemeni population. The main challenges include:
 - Lack of (central) state income due to economic collapse and localisation of tax receipts;
 - Exhaustion of foreign reserves and depreciation of the local currency;
 - Negative effects of politicisation of institutions designed to be neutral, such as the Central Bank;
 - Inability to pay salaries in critical sectors (health care, education and waste management); and
 - Insecurity and damage to public service buildings and infrastructure.
- 3. Spread of communicable diseases such as cholera and diphtheria.** The lack of nutrition, clean drinking water and health care services has made Yemenis vulnerable to infectious diseases. While the cholera infection rate is slowing down, the risk factors remain, as also indicated by the outbreak of diphtheria in November 2017. The main challenges include:
 - Vulnerability of the population due to malnutrition and dehydration;
 - Cessation of public sanitation works, contaminated water and infection-prone environment; and
 - Unsalaries health care staff and scarcity of medicines, vaccines, and fuel.
- 4. Internal displacement due to fighting and insecurity.** Since the onset of the conflict, a large number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has been added to the pre-existing mix of refugees and migrants, with around 2 million persons currently internally displaced, in particular those from frontline areas, such as Hodeidah, Taizz, Hajjah, Sa'ada and Amanat Al Asimah. The main challenges include:
 - Providing emergency shelter and access to vital commodities;
 - Lowering or containing social tensions between displaced people and host communities; and
 - Ensuring the continuation of regular registration and documentation processes for asylum-seekers and refugees.

The above-mentioned issues all come with their own specificities to tackle, but many of the challenges are heavily interlinked with one another. To generating positive chain affects in the immediate-to-short term, international donors could focus on these interlinkages and take actions that work towards:

A) Enabling and improving access and distribution of vital goods throughout Yemen. A first set of interlinked problems can be addressed by improving access to, and distribution of, vital commodities - food, fuel and medicines, to start with. Action generating large impact include:

- Improving the flow of commercial goods and humanitarian aid through Hodeidah by increasing the robustness of security guarantees through UNVIM, minimising delays for ships that have passed UNVIM inspection, and repairing damage to the port due to conflict.
- Facilitating humanitarian access to Hodeidah port and rerouting commercial trade via alternative ports. Aden would be the most viable option, though at the risk of congestion and with the caveat that the most affected governates are located in the north.
- Assist with alternative access options by land and air. International donors could directly sponsor and facilitate humanitarian airlifts as well as overland routes, including providing for mobile storage units and creating secured land corridors.

Other actions international donors can take to improve the situation include:

- Assisting civilians and humanitarian agencies with access to fuel;
- Increasing the mobility of civilians to enable them to reach marketplaces;
- Encouraging local production and local import substitutes; and
- Strengthening communication and coordination with the humanitarian community.

B) Stabilising Yemen's financial system and ensuring indiscriminate basic service provision. A second set of interlinked problems relates to the decrease of state income, currency depreciation and inflation rates. Possible actions include:

- Providing financial assistance directed at the payment of salaries of public sector workers;
- Providing technical assistance to the Central Bank and other vital financial institutions;
- Increasing liquidity in the financial system through cash injections or unfreezing assets;
- Expanding cash-based assistance for basic goods, increasing purchasing power and liquidity;
- Setting up emergency provisions for education, health care and waste management; and
- Investing in conflict-sensitive education and life-style changing awareness campaigns.

C) Scaling up assistance and living up to aid pledges. Despite the US\$2 billion in multilateral and bilateral humanitarian aid provided in 2017, the outlook for Yemen deteriorated that year. This year, multilateral pledges have increased, but scaling up of aid should go hand-in-hand with attempts to improve the accountability and capacity of local authorities.

International donors could also invest in aid effectiveness by:

- Helping to minimise bureaucratic hurdles by facilitating permits and negotiating local access;
- Channeling (earmarked) donations through the multilaterally-pooled funds; and,
- Engaging in effective partnerships with other donors or implementing agencies.