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UNICEF Yemen Situation Report

February 2015

Key focus:

**Child trafficking and
unaccompanied children**

A woman carries a gallon of water on her back at the al-Azraq camp for displaced persons (IDPs) in Haradh, Hajjah Governorate

Highlights:

- **71,265 children were given birth certificates in February as mobile teams visited seven governorates for the first time.**
- **1,623 children under 5 have been treated so far in a mass malnutrition campaign in Haradh IDP camps and surrounding areas. Over a third were found to have some level of acute malnutrition.**

Situation Overview

In February the President withdrew his resignation and is currently in Aden where he has declared the Sana'a based governing council unconstitutional. Most Gulf states have expressed their support for President Hadi by moving their diplomatic representation to Aden in recent weeks.

The UN CTFMR remains deeply concerned that children continue to be affected by grave child rights violations in Yemen. During the month of February, the UNCTFMR verified a total of nine incidents related to killing and maiming, where 15 children were maimed (8 boys and 7 girls) and two boys were killed. In one particular incident, a 12 year old boy in Marib was killed by a drone attack while traveling by car in Harib District (Marib Governorate). Additionally one incident was reported in Amran when five children between the ages of 4 and 8 were maimed due to a grenade explosion. The incident continues to emphasize the criticality of surveying and clearing areas from mines/unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and of conducting widespread mine risk awareness (MRE) campaigns.

UN personnel also continue to observe the presence of children manning check points, while the UN CTFMR was able to verify two instances of this, one in Hodeidah and one in Sada'a.

Key focus: Child trafficking and unaccompanied children

Issue

Since the beginning of 2014, nearly 1,000 Yemeni children are known to have travelled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) alone in search of income. Most (767) of these children reached the country only to be expelled, while some were found at the border crossings either by law enforcement and immigration authorities (165) or found wandering alone in the northern border town of Haradh (9). An increased number of children are currently being deported from KSA via Al Boqaa land port (193 recorded in 2014 by law enforcement authorities) and Alb land port (454 recorded in 2014), both in Sa'ada at the border with KSA.

At the same time, an estimated 15,000 children escape poverty and drought in the Horn of Africa every year and undertake the hazardous journey across the Gulf of Aden with the help of human smugglers to reach the Yemeni shores¹. A UNICEF profiling exercise conducted in mid-2013 showed that the children are mainly Ethiopian, often unaccompanied, the majority of whom end up in the hands of human traffickers and experience terrible ordeals and human rights abuses at all stages of the journey. Most children from the Horn of Africa, including the detained children are not interested in gaining refugee status, rather they prefer to return to their families in their country of origin.

Impact

The deteriorating security situation, economic hardship and deepening poverty have contributed to an increase in human smuggling and trafficking activities. The numbers detailed here are of those children who have been identified as smuggled, but it is likely that there are many more at risk. Children on the move, particularly those who are unaccompanied, come from poor backgrounds with little or no education and are burdened with helping their families survive. Many suffer from violence, abuse and exploitation, resulting in serious physical and mental health, as well as social problems.

Action

UNICEF Yemen works with partners in a number of ways to address the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Yemen. It promotes closer collaboration between authorities in Yemen and KSA to combat child trafficking and to ensure UASCs are dealt with in a friendly manner, as well as supporting:

Front line emergency support and interim care: at the child reception centre at Al Tuwal land port (Haradh/Hajjah) and at the Haradh safe shelter/Child Protection centre run by MoSAL with UNICEF's support. Interim care includes a holistic package of services from education, recreation/sports activities, medical support, life skills/ vocational training and family tracing, for the children to heal, recuperate and prepare for their safe return home.

Family tracing and safe return; as well as rehabilitation/reintegration programmes and follow up/monitoring assistance by social workers for some of the most vulnerable Yemeni children and their families.

Community awareness raising: to prevent and combat child smuggling/trafficking with parents, service providers and children themselves.

Since January 2014, 941 Yemeni UASCs (21 girls, 920 boys) were identified, registered and provided with protection assistance, including safe rescue, reception, interim care, family tracing and reunification, rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities. Also, 601 UASC boys from Ethiopia, were identified, registered, repatriated, reintegrated and reunited with their families in their home country.

Appeal

UNICEF's 2015 UASC programme focusing on child smuggling and trafficking requires US\$ 1.5 million in funding. The programme remains severely underfunded and requires urgent financial support.



An unaccompanied Ethiopian child waits at the Kharaz Camp in Lahj Governorate

UNICEF Yemen Nationwide Response

Health:

6,927 children under 5 were vaccinated; 2,372 pregnant women received antenatal services and 1,226 children under 5 were given therapeutic feeding for severe acute malnutrition through integrated health and nutrition mobile services in Hajjah and Mahweet.

96 practicing community health workers were given refresher training on community based maternal and newborn care (CBMNC) in Dhale.

48 health workers (15 female) from Rayma and Mahweet were trained on Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI)/ Health Systems Strengthening (HSS)

WASH:

2,234 families (13,070 individuals) have been given basic hygiene kits and 1,077 families have received monthly consumable hygiene kits in the north of Yemen. In addition, 2,456 students have received hygiene kits in 15 schools in Harad District

3,594 students are now able to use 41 school latrines following maintenance work in 6 local community schools in the northern governorates. In addition, 60 latrines have been maintained for 93 IDP families in and outside camps.

4,139 people (635 families) have taken part in hygiene promotion activities run by 10 local promoters (50% female) from Razeh District in the north.

7,200 people, including 1,242 children are now benefitting from the instalment of three water pumps as part of water supply projects in Al Dhale, southern Yemen.

43,699 people including 19,533 children now have access to WASH facilities in two districts in Abyan after targeted health facilities and open wells were improved.



Children in Taiz make a demonstration in their village, shouting "no more open latrines!"

Nutrition:

1,623 children under 5 have been treated so far in a mass malnutrition campaign in the Haradh IDP camps and surrounding areas as a response to the deterioration of the nutritional situation of IDPs reflected by the second SMART survey. The children were screened from tent to tent, with 128 found to be suffering from severe acute malnutrition and 554 suffering from moderate acute malnutrition.

12,998 people took part in health and nutrition awareness sessions conducted by five mobile teams in Dhale (7,510), Shabwa (1,532) and Abyan (3,956). The teams also screened under 5s for nutrition and treated 100 children for severe acute malnutrition.

© UNICEF Hodeidah/2015/Rasha Al Ardi



Children receive therapeutic food as part of the mass treatment campaign for malnutrition in Haradh IDP camps.

187 health workers and volunteers were trained to increase government capacity to manage and treat cases of malnourishment in the community.

147 community volunteers were trained to provide integrated health, nutrition and WASH services as part of the UNICEF/EU project.

Child Protection:

16,647 people including 4,387 girls and 5,448 boys were taught about the risks of mines in Abyan, Al Dhale, Al Jawf, Sa'ada and Shabwah Governorates.

60 social workers and teachers (25 females) were trained on mine risk education (MRE) to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to deliver MRE messages.

8,350 people including 3,834 girls and 4,253 boys received Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) through community and school based child friendly spaces in Abyan, Al Dhale, Taiz and Sana'a Governorates.

46 social workers, animators and community volunteers (17 female) from six governorates were trained on protecting children in emergency and on providing them with psychosocial support.

71,265 marginalized, disadvantaged and most vulnerable children (32,211 girls, 39,054 boys) were given birth certificates as mobile teams visited seven governorates for the first time (Al Mahweet, Al Hodeidah, Hajjah, Sa'ada, Sana'a, Al Dhale'e and Lahj). The teams also raised awareness among children, parents, community and religious leaders on the importance of birth registration through awareness sessions and distribution of key messages.



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Girls receive information on the importance of birth registration, after receiving a birth certificate in Al Razih district, Sa'ada Governorate

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