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Key focus:

Conflict in the north and south

The new water project in Al-Qufi in Hajjah has cut down on water trucking in the area by one third.

Highlights:

- 11,559 children are set to benefit from improved learning environments over the next few months as improvement plans are reviewed and implemented in 21 schools in Sa'ada and Al Jawf.
- 135 children including 73 unaccompanied migrant children were helped to return voluntarily to Ethiopia this month by IOM with UNICEF and DRC.

Humanitarian Context

The humanitarian context in Yemen has been increasingly characterized by localized, tribal conflict leading to small scale short-term displacements. Such trends are expected to continue and are, for the most part, a reflection of internal and regional political dynamics. While there is hope towards a new Yemen with the transitional Government entering its 2nd year; and with the conclusion of the national dialogue conference, children continue to be subjected to grave child rights violations. Armed conflict affects the safety and security of children and denies their basic rights. Even where conflict has ended, mines, unexploded ordnance (UXOs) or other explosive remnants of war (ERWs) pose significant risks to children who often mistake them for things to play with. Attacks on schools and hospitals also impact children's right to education and health.

Aside from the conflict, around 58 per cent of children under 5 are malnourished and 14,000 die from preventable diseases every year. Poor water and poor hygiene contribute significantly to these diseases and in emergency situations, the situation is even more critical.

Emerging Issues:

The 2014 budget for health care allows just US\$32 per person in Yemen, but is not split equally. Primary health care is allocated just 1.1%, while public or specialized hospitals are 38%. This poses a significant problem considering that the cost of delivering an essential health and nutrition package is US\$34 per person. UNICEF will be advocating with the Ministry of Health to prioritize programmes that have an impact on women and children's health and nutrition status.

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Conflict in the north and south

Issue:

In Sa'ada Governorate (north) armed clashes between Al Houthi/Ansar Allah and the Salafists in Dammaj and Qitaf have resulted in a siege imposed by each party on areas under their control, which lasted for more than 3 months. While a ceasefire was reached, the situation remains tense and more than 400 families are estimated to have been affected. In the Harf Sufyan and Huth Districts of Amran Governorate, Al Houthi/Ansar Allah also clashed with local armed tribes backed by the Islah party and Al Ahmar tribal group. Over 3,000 families are thought to have been displaced since November 2013 but this figure may change with further assessments.

In the south, tensions have also risen between the southern cessation movement and local government security forces, particularly in Al Dhale'e Governorate. An uprising on 20th December 2013 was followed by more unrest throughout January 2014 and heavy clashes resulted in the displacement of hundreds of families. Access to conflict affected communities by humanitarian actors has been obstructed.

Impact:

UNICEF is seriously alarmed by the increasing number of affected children in these areas and deeply concerned over reported attacks on schools and hospitals, which affect the security and safety of children and hamper their access to their basic rights. Compared with 2012, Sa'ada has seen a 94% increase in casualties, Amran 100% and Al Dhale 78% while in the rest of the country, figures decreased (by 28% killed and 7% maimed). Houses, schools and water wells are reported to have been partially or completely damaged, with many schools closed or subjected to deliberate attacks and crossfire in the north. Families have stopped sending their children to schools due to the deteriorating security and children are scared of going out to play because of the sound of gun shots and shelling. At least one of the schools has been used as a military barracks for armed men, its windows now blocked by sand bags and stones. An estimated 1,885 children were only able to study for one month during 2013 due to the loss or destruction of their schools. Hospitals have been attacked, the markets are deserted and people who remain are fearful of mines, unexploded ordnance (UXOs) or explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

In the south, in the past month alone, 22 children have been killed or maimed, many were caught up in indiscriminate shelling, while one boy was shot while participating in demonstrations. On one occasion, military forces fired shells at a funeral tent at a school, killing or injuring dozens of people, including 12 children. Due to the heavy clashes in the area, all schools in Al Dhale City have been closed. None of the three water wells that serve the city are functioning and one is reported to be occupied and used by the military forces. This has left 25,000 people, including 13,500 children totally reliant on water trucking.



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UNICEF Response:

UNICEF and partners continue to monitor and report information to the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting of Grave Violations Against Children in Armed Conflicts (CTF MR). All reported child victims are being followed up to ensure that immediate medical and psychosocial support is provided.

In Sa'ada, 426 families affected by the recent conflict have been given water filters and hygiene kits. The school reconstruction work funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) targeting four schools will resume after the area has been declared free from mines and UXOs. In Amran, 13,694 people including IDPs and host communities received mine risk education in 6 affected districts, while 814 families have also been given hygiene kits. Additional support will be provided as more displaced families are identified. Water trucking for 555 IDPs families (5,980 individuals) has been provided to transit camps in Amran, Khamer, and Rayda Districts. As a result of assessments led by the local education offices, a decree was issued to allow IDP children to be integrated into schools where they have been displaced to ensure their continued education.

In Al Dhale, UNICEF worked with the Education Office to transfer students to the nearest schools so that they could continue their education. UNICEF is also supporting the local water and sanitation cooperation to re-operate the two wells and advocate with the Government to bring the third back into service.

Nationwide Response



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Women and children are taught about hygiene

EDUCATION

2,260 children (680 boys, 1,580 girls) are out of school in Taiz Governorate according to a rapid assessment. The results of this were presented and solutions sought during a workshop with 119 officials, community leaders and others.

30 supervisors from the Illiteracy office in Hodeidah and 15 local authority, education and Illiteracy office staff from Kusam District were trained on the importance of advocating for girls education.

1,500 children are now able to use three latrines rehabilitated this month in their schools in Hodeidah.

WASH

5,757 IDP families in Hajjah including 518 newly displaced families from Al-Faj were given hygiene kits, while 1,184 IDPs (including 162 families from Al-Faj) were given 101 temporary metallic latrines.

The Water Supply Network in Haidan District has been completed with nearly 17,520 meters of pipe. This will benefit 11,000 people whose needs are met in a more sustainable manner.

300 households in Abyan were given ceramic water filters and two of the planned 10 shallow wells have been rehabilitated in Timhen and Sa'ad Districts.

NUTRITION

	CHVs	HWs Outpatient Therapeutic Programme	HWs Infant & Young Child Feeding	HWs Therapeutic Feeding Centre	Total
Hodeidah /Hajjah	265				265
Al Dahee	20				20
Abyan		22			22
Lahj			20		20
Taiz	38	68			106
Ibb		56		12	68
Total	323	146	20	12	501

501 health workers (178) and community volunteers (323) were trained in January to provide nutrition interventions.

Interagency Collaboration

Cluster priorities for the next two years were agreed this month and include:

Targeting 800,000 children under 5 with immunization to address life threatening conditions such as measles.

The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violation will target 2 million people, including children in affected areas.



6 month old Ali Abdou was admitted to a mobile outpatient therapeutic programme with severe malnutrition and is now recovering well. His parents, who have seven other children, could not have afforded the US\$30 cost of transport to their nearest hospital so they are very pleased that the mobile service is based in a nearby school, just 15 minutes away from their home.

927 adolescents (400 girls, 527 boys) were trained as peer educators in relation to child protection issues. Together they went on to reach over 17,686 adolescents (8,724 girls, 8,962 boys) with child protection in emergency mes-

CHILD PROTECTION

54,653 people including 12,648 girls, 19,455 boys, 11,639 women and 10,911 men, received mine risk education under the leadership of YEMAC and in partnership with MOSAL and DRC/DGG in Abyan, Amran and Sa'ada.

30,324 children (13,816 girls, 16,508 boys) received psychosocial support services through child friendly spaces in the governorates of Abyan, Amran, Sana'a and Shabwah.

175 community members, including 18 girls and 26 boys, received awareness raising sessions on a variety of child protection issues such as child marriage, trafficking and violence against children in Abyan, Shabwa and Sa'ada Governorates.

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