UNICEF Yemen Situation Report
September 2014

Key focus:
Conflict in the Capital, Sana’a

Highlights:

Around 75,000 children in Sana’a had their education disrupted as their schools were in or around the conflict zones. Escalation of conflicts led to the suspension of all schools in the city.

27,840 children are benefiting from the distribution of 9,280 benches and tables to the 32 Global Partnership for Education (GPE) schools in Sa’ada, Sana’a, Mareb and Aden Governorates.

Situation Overview

During September, the conflicts in Amran and Al Jawf continued to deteriorate. Moreover, there was tension due the conflict and the decreasing security situation in Sana’a. At the end of September, the Security Situation improved due to the Peace and National Partnership Agreement signed on 21 September 2014, which ended the armed violence that affected the capital city. However, given the reported incidents documented and verified so far, UNICEF remains deeply concerned that children continue to be affected by grave child rights violations since the intensification of armed violence in Sana’a. The majority of IDPs displaced in Amran during the recent conflict in Sana’a city have returned since the peace agreement was signed.

In Amran, 62 schools were affected by the conflict, of which, 31 schools were used by IDPs affected 7,257 (4,809 boys and 2,448 girls). UNICEF has assessed all affected schools, advocated to open them and get students back. Each of the 31 schools was given an improvement grant and 24 were selected to rehabilitate. UNICEF has undertaken a coordinated and systematic response to ensure that further disruption of schooling is avoided, successfully advocating the re-opening of Sana’a schools by 29 September as well as advocating for the armed groups to vacate schools. Moreover UNICEF has supported institutions to accelerate mine clearance and mine risk education in schools and surrounding areas; and has shared key messages to parents through radio and other means to ensure that children are better protected and supported from psychosocial consequences of the conflict as well as from dangers of mines, explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and unexploded ordnance (UXOs).

In the southern governorates, the situation is deteriorating due to the escalation of attacks by al-Qaeda in Shabwa, Hadramout, Abyan and Lahj and armed conflicts in Dhale. In order to strengthen the existing services for vulnerable children in Aden, Taiz and Ibb, at least 650 social workers, front line workers, and child protection committee members (women: 359, men: 291) received comprehensive information and skills on how to identify vulnerable children, manage their cases and refer them to the specialized social workers as needed. Twenty-four newly established child protection committees are now monitoring the situation of children, referring those most vulnerable to social workers and facilitating their referral to necessary services.
Key focus: Conflict in the Capital, Sana’a

Issue
The recent weeks have seen an escalation of tensions, clashes and violence in Sana’a, which have added to the ongoing conflicts affecting other parts of the country. Many families chose to relocate temporarily to avoid the conflict, some outside the city. Unfortunately, it is not the first time Yemeni children and other civilians have faced serious threats to their safety, health and well-being. The country has long suffered from armed conflict and wars. By the end of the month, the security situation in Sana’a had improved somewhat following the signing of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement on 21 September 2014 and families began returning to the capital following the Eid holiday.

However, UNICEF is gravely concerned about the vulnerability of children in light of the deteriorating security situation in Yemen. Physical safety and access to education and health are basic rights for every child.

Impact
As families relocated due to the eruption of violence in the capital, schools in the immediate area of conflict began to close. By the end of the month, the Ministry of Education reported that 51 schools had been affected by the fighting, 4 were severely damaged, 20 moderately so and a further 27 needed to be cleaned up before education could resume. In addition, the Minister of Education ordered all schools in the capital to be closed, which lasted for a period of two weeks.

During this time, the UN also documented and verified 18 incidents of grave violations against children in Sana’a City (Amanat Al Asimah, 15) and Governorate (3). A further 26 incidents were verified in the neighbouring governorates of Amran (22), Al Jawf (1) and Sa’ada (3). The 44 incidents affected 41 children (37 boys and 4 girls), included 13 direct attacks on schools and hospitals and 3 denials of humanitarian access. Amongst the verified incidents, five children (3 boys, 2 girls) were killed and 19 maimed (17 boys and two girls); 16 boys were recruited and used by parties to the conflict; one boy was abducted; one school and two hospitals were attacked causing physical destruction to the facilities; and 10 schools were used for military purposes (all of which have now been vacated). The majority of the incidents occurred in Amran, Sana’a and Amanat Al Asimah, which are areas where the Al Houthis/Ansar Allah and the Yemeni Armed Forces supported by pro-government tribal groups affiliated to the Islah, have been fighting.

Action
In order to respond to the current conflict in Amanat Al Asimah, UNICEF through local partners, distributed MRE messages to the affected people in Maeen District reaching at least 4,000 people including children. UNICEF also issued a press release to prevent the risks of mines, UXOs and ERWs as well as the participation in TV and Radio interviews to advocate for the importance of the protection of children during and after the armed conflict. The awareness activities were spread widely to include not only the area of Sana’a but also neighbouring affected governorates of Al Jawf and Amran.

In Nahdha in Sana’a, the electricity power was off for a week during the fighting period. Water pumping from private water source stations was affected and the price of water trucking increased from 3,000/3,500YR ($15-17) to 4,000/5,000YR ($20-25) for 8,000 litres. UNICEF supported water trucking for three days to 100 households (850 individuals) in this area.

In neighbouring Amran, an Education Task Force team was appointed to assess the situation of all 31 affected schools used by IDPs. The Education Task Force advocated with local community members and community leaders for community engagement to reopen the schools. UNICEF also provided a school improvement grant for each affected school.
UNICEF Yemen Nationwide Response

Education:

3,419 (900 male, 2,519 female) out of school children resumed their classes in Taiz Governorate.

86 child friendly school (CFS) committee members including from 12 new schools, were trained on SSA and preparation of CFS plans in Taiz.

9,048 children are benefitting from the distribution of 3,016 new benches in conflict affected schools in Sa’ada.

200 children are now benefitting from the reconstruction of the war-destroyed Om Laila School in Baqim District in Sa’ada. The new building was handed over in September 2014.

WASH:

36,447 IDPs in Hajja were provided with a daily water supply (33,626 IDPs by water projects and 2,821 IDPs by water trucks).

25,200 local community members benefited from the improvement and reopening of 37 wells and hand pumps (25 wells in Aslam, 9 in Abs and 3 in Bani Qais).

32,909 IDPs were given 5,080 family hygiene kits in five districts of Hajjah Governorate. 700 vulnerable families have received consumable hygiene kits in Amran.

Child Protection:

19,333 people including 13,387 children (5,909 girls, 7,478 boys) received mine risk education in Dhale, Abyan, Sana’a and Amanat Al-Asimah Governorates.

18,010 people including 17,777 children (8,187 girls, 9,590 boys) received psychosocial support services through community based child friendly spaces in Abyan, Dhale and Shabwa Governorates.

38 unaccompanied migrant children, all boys, were assisted with safe voluntary return to Ethiopia. Once back in Ethiopia, they also received psychosocial support and other services.

Health:

18 supportive supervision visits were conducted for community midwives implementing Community Based Maternal Newborn Care (CBMNC) services in Dhale, who were also given life-saving drugs and community midwife kits.

20 community midwives received 18 days of competency based training on CBMNC guidelines in five districts of Lahj Governorate.

145 health workers from Abyan took part in extended programme of immunization (EPI) evaluation meetings including refreshing all important issues for increasing vaccination coverage, tracking defaulters, and calculating target groups in Aden Governorate.
Nutrition:

130 health workers were trained on CMAM in Sa’ada, Al-Jawf, Abyan, Dhale, Shabwa, Hodeidah, Taiz, Ibb, Rayma, Mahweet and Hajja. In addition, 985 volunteers were trained on the integrated package and communication for development and 57 health officials on nutrition monitoring and evaluation.

16,887 children were screened for malnutrition in emergency areas of Sa’ada. From this number, 1,403 (6%) children had a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) below 11.5 cm, which indicates severe malnutrition and 2,895 children had a MUAC between 11.5 and 12.5 cm. In addition, 14,992 received deworming treatment.

A child in Hodeidah is screened for malnutrition using MUAC tape

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Spokesperson</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Health Nutrition</td>
<td>Iqbal Kabir, Chief of YCSD</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>+967 71222 3426 <a href="mailto:ikabir@unicef.org">ikabir@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Mohamed Ali Bile, Chief of Basic Education and Gender Equity</td>
<td>English, Arabic</td>
<td>+967 71222 3015 <a href="mailto:mabile@unicef.org">mabile@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Mahboob Ahmed Bajwa, Snr Water, Sanitation, Hygiene Specialist</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>+967 71222 3050 <a href="mailto:mabajwa@unicef.org">mabajwa@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>Micaela Pasini, Chief of Child Protection</td>
<td>English, French, Spanish, Italian</td>
<td>+967 712223370 <a href="mailto:mpasini@unicef.org">mpasini@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Mission</td>
<td>Julien Morcom Harneis, Representative</td>
<td>English, French, Spanish</td>
<td>+967 71110 6127 <a href="mailto:jharneis@unicef.org">jharneis@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Kate Rose, Reports and Communications Officer</td>
<td>English, Malay</td>
<td>+967 71222 3421 <a href="mailto:krose@unicef.org">krose@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information, contact:
Jeremy Hopkins, Deputy Representative, +967-71222-3493