

Context

The political situation in Yemen remains unclear, but behind-the-scenes negotiations are ongoing between the various actors. As long as political negotiations take place, there is still the potential for a political solution to the current impasse.

Over the past few days, thousands of Yemenis have taken to the streets protesting against or in favour of the Houthi group that has taken over the capital Sana'a. Some protestors were reportedly kidnapped and subsequently released and others, including journalists, were reportedly injured during the protests. Although there is no functioning Cabinet in Yemen at the moment, political and security analysts do not anticipate that the situation will dissolve into chaos in the near future. Thus far, most governorate level offices are functioning and do not seem to be impacted much by the crisis at the center.

Former President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, former Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and certain members of the Cabinet are still under house arrest by the Houthis. The former President's Chief of Staff, Ahmed Bin Mubarak, was released recently after being held captive by the Houthis for nine days.

Overall the situation is fluid and uncertain and there are many possible scenarios for how events will develop in the coming weeks. The situation is being closely monitored and further updates will be provided on any concrete developments as the situation warrants.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF distributed 400 leaflets to families and community members with information about psychosocial support (PSS) and mine risk education immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The document contained a hotline number for the Yemen Mine Action demining team.

Assessments were also made on the presence or use of children at checkpoints. The UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on children affected by armed conflict (UNCTFMR) has verified 27 cases of children aged between 14 and 17 years manning Al Houthi/Ansar Allah checkpoints. Children interviewed reported that they work in shifts, and when their shift is over, often, other children take over.

Advocacy efforts with the Houthis/Ansar Allah are ongoing on grave child rights violations and the impact the recent conflict has had on children.

Child Friendly Spaces are being initiated in affected areas through the Child Protection Initiative (CPI), UNICEF's partner. It is estimated that 3,600 children will benefit from these activities in the communities.

Coordination is also ongoing with YEMAC to start mine risk education and further distribute pamphlets in the affected communities to reach 4,600 children and adults.