



HALF A **DECADE** OF HUNGER

HOW CONFLICT HAS
STARVED YEMEN'S
FUTURE GENERATIONS



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
THE CURRENT SITUATION IN YEMEN	5
CONFLICT AS A DRIVER OF MALNUTRITION.....	6
CASE STORIES - THE REALITY IN YEMEN	8
HUMAN APPEAL'S WORK IN YEMEN	12
THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS IN YEMEN.....	14
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
ENDNOTES.....	17

ACRONYMS

GHI

Global Hunger Index

IDPs

Internally Displaced Persons

NFI

Non-Food Items

UN OCHA

United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

WFP

World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human Appeal is a humanitarian organisation, delivering disaster relief and development programmes around the world for nearly 30 years in order to drive global change and make the biggest positive impact on the lives of people who need it most. We are a faith-based organisation, inspired by the Islamic values of; excellence, accountability and transparency, compassion, justice, empowerment, trust and respect. These values are core humanitarian values, and they guide us in serving the people we help. In a world that is improving for some, we seek to underpin progress through sustainable development programmes that will have a long-term impact on lives, and in parts of the world where conflict is still rife, we run towards the danger to protect the innocent. In short, we are here for every human.

In this report, with a focus on children and future generations, we provide a summary of the situation facing the people of Yemen five years into the conflict that has killed and displaced hundreds of thousands, and starved millions.

As one of the largest humanitarian crises to blight the world in the 2010s, the ongoing relentless conflict and the consequences for Yemen's economy and infrastructure have combined to push the country into a state of famine for years on end. This has undoubtedly had a harrowing

impact on future generations, especially those born into the conflict whose parents do not know where the next meal is coming from. As is sadly the case in crises like this, it is those who are already vulnerable who suffer.

Human Appeal has worked in Yemen since before the conflict started. The country was already suffering from extreme poverty before the conflict exacerbated the already fragile situation. This report also highlights some of the work we have carried out in Yemen during the course of the conflict, and brings to attention some of the real-life stories of people whose lives have been positively impacted by our work.

However, it would not be right for us to only work to help some of the most vulnerable. Thanks to our fantastic donors we reach millions of people around the world, but we are aware there are millions more in need of help. Therefore, we see it as our role to advocate on behalf of all the people of Yemen, especially the generations seeing their futures waste away. To that end, this report also builds on the conclusions drawn from our 2018 report 'Hunger as a Weapon of War: How Food Insecurity Has Been Exacerbated in Syria and Yemen', and highlights our recommendations to global actors which we believe are necessary in order to relieve the suffering of the Yemeni people.

CURRENT SITUATION IN YEMEN

There is no beating around the bush. UN OCHA expects Yemen's humanitarian crisis to remain the worst in the world as we head into this decade, where around 80% of the population, at least 24 million people, will remain in need of humanitarian assistance.¹ This staggering figure has barely changed from last year, as the conflict has continued and more people have had their lives thrown into turmoil either through direct attacks or disease, starvation and displacement.

Since the beginning of the conflict, **more than 100,000 people have died** as a result of direct hostilities, including **over 18,400 civilians**.² As poverty drives more people into taking up arms as a way of providing for their family, the conflict robs families of their breadwinner when they are inevitably killed or injured, taking away their one source of income. The cycles of conflict and poverty are inextricably connected in this way, and through both the hindrance of aid and the direct threat to the safety of humanitarian workers, the increasingly hostile conflict is also impacting on the ability of aid organisations to reach people. It is therefore contributing and adding in numerous ways to the number of people in desperate need.

While so many people are estimated to have died as a direct result of fighting during the conflict, it is estimated that even more, 130,000, have died from hunger and disease.³ The cholera outbreak in 2016 has continued unabated, with millions of suspected cases and thousands of associated deaths, however with only half of the country's health facilities being fully functional, cholera has remained widespread in 90% of Yemen's districts.⁴

During the course of the civil war, Yemen has also had an outbreak of diphtheria. The spread of disease has not been helped by the sheer number of IDPs within Yemen, with an estimated 3.65 million people displaced since the start of the conflict in March 2015.⁵ With so many people moving in-country, disease can spread easily and kill those vulnerable people who are most susceptible, especially children.

But perhaps the most shocking figures stemming from Yemen's humanitarian crisis relate to the widespread hunger and malnutrition. Over 20 million people are severely food insecure, and 15.9 million are in urgent need of food and livelihood assistance.⁶ It is this sheer scale of destitution that is starving Yemen's future generations. This is the brutal reality that this report highlights, and which the international community has an obligation to act on.



“Over 20 million people are severely food insecure, and 15.9 million are in urgent need of food and livelihood assistance. It is this sheer scale of destitution that is starving Yemen's future generations.”

CONFLICT AS A DRIVER OF MALNUTRITION

Food insecurity is rife in Yemen. It has been exacerbated by the civil war through economic blockades, as well as the deliberate devastation of the agricultural industry many Yemenis rely on. In turn, the poverty these actions have resulted in is a key factor in prolonging the conflict, as starving people take up arms as the only means of providing for their families. This vicious cycle has led to widespread malnutrition, with devastating long-term effects for future generations.

While Yemen has had well-documented issues with hunger and malnutrition for decades, the current conflict is undoubtedly responsible for the unprecedented rise in people needing urgent food assistance. This is reflected in the sharp rise in Yemen's GHI Score from 34.5 to 45.9 over the last decade, ranking 116th out of 117 countries scored, and the underlying figures indicating that the proportion of the population who are undernourished has shot up from 25.7% to 38.9% in the same period.⁷

At the beginning of 2019 it was estimated that out of the 3.2 million people needing treatment for acute malnutrition at the time, over 1 million were pregnant and lactating women. As we highlighted in our report 'Hunger as a Weapon of War: How Food Insecurity Has Been Exacerbated in Syria and Yemen', when mothers cannot adequately nourish their children or themselves

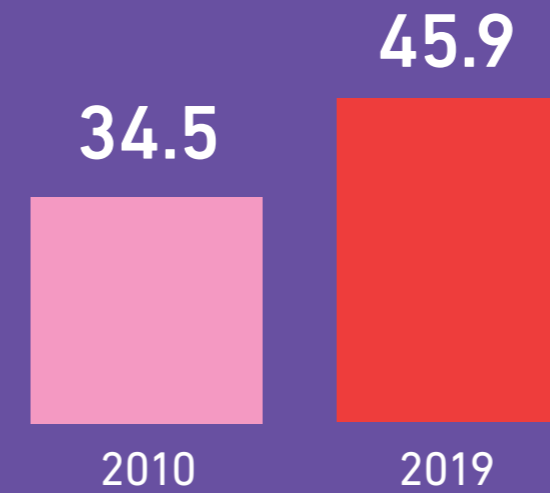
during pregnancy it can lead to immediate health issues such as brain damage, as well as long-term effects when a child misses the 'window of opportunity'; the 1,000-day period where a lack of nourishment and nutrition stunts mental and physical development.⁸ The effects of this are seen in Yemen's increased stunting and wasting rates in children under 5 of 61.1% and 17.9% respectively, which both stand higher than at the start of the decade, evidencing how the conflict has starved future generations before and as soon as they are born.⁹

However, despite this, there has been no rise in the mortality rate for children under 5 years old. The rate of 5.5% recorded by the GHI in 2017 is barely different from the 5.6% recorded in 2010.¹⁰ Children are surviving, but are growing stunted and wasted by the conflict.

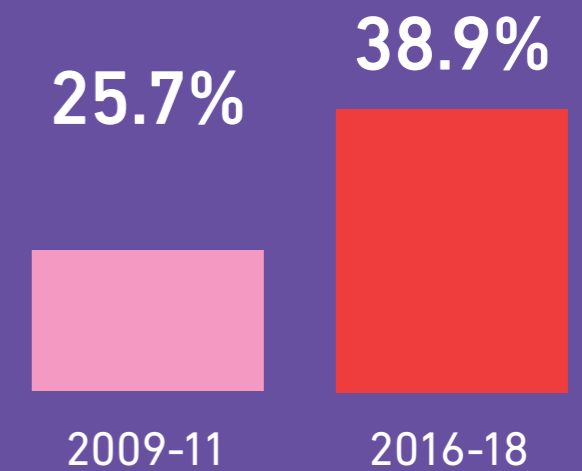
But ultimately, the number of children going hungry is rising. According to the WFP at the beginning of this year, 1.7 million children under 5 are suffering from moderate acute malnutrition, and 360,000 are suffering from severe malnutrition¹¹, a combined figure that stands 260,000 higher than the equivalent recorded one year earlier.¹² When taking this and all the available evidence into account, we argue that the conflict is a direct cause of the malnourishment and starvation of Yemen's future generations.



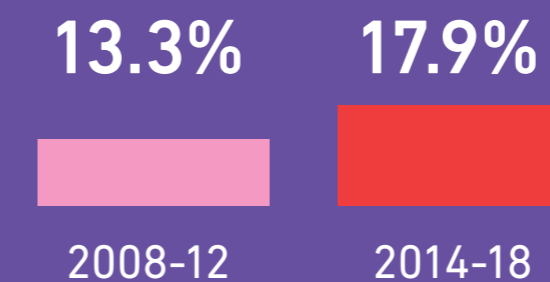
The Global hunger index score



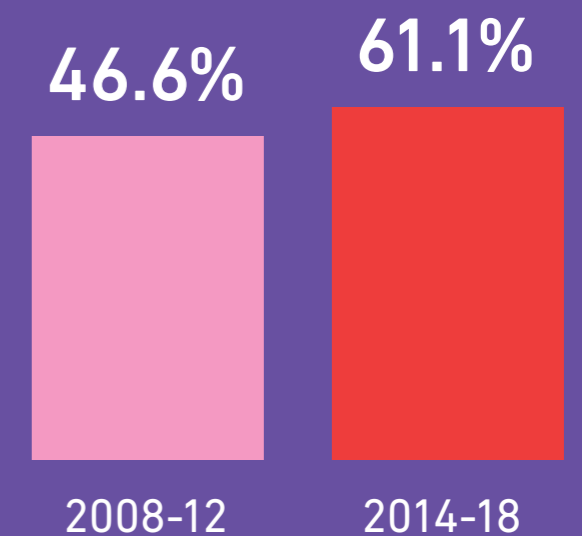
Proportion of population undernourished



Wasting in children under 5



Stunting in children under 5



CASE STORIES – THE REALITY IN YEMEN

At least 50% of Yemen's population lives in poverty.¹³ An entire generation is being starved out of a future, even while they are still in the womb.

At the end of 2018, Human Appeal commissioned a poll which found that 42% of people in the UK didn't know there was a war in Yemen. Since then, ambivalence towards the war may have grown, but for the past five years and in some cases longer, people in Yemen have not had that luxury. These are some of their stories.



Intisar was born healthy, but her condition rapidly deteriorated four months into the conflict as the agricultural sector her father's job relied on was quickly destroyed. Her mother risked moving her, and managed to get Intisar to Al-Jumhori hospital in Sa'dah, supported by Human Appeal, where she received basic care and food that stabilised her condition.



Sawsan was 6 years old, living in the village of Algushima when her family received one of our food parcels. When we visited them afterwards, we found that she was sleeping on the desert floor. We asked her father if he was afraid of any animals that could harm his children. He said "there are snakes and scorpions but they can't be a problem as they can hit them with a stick if they saw them and kill them". He then said "if we don't see them then it's up to God what happens to us".



Amar was 15 and Saeed was 6 when we found them at a garbage dump where they lived in a hut made of wood and cartons. They were looking for their next meal, and for any items they could sell. Their father's ability to provide for the family was taken away when his eyesight deteriorated and he could no longer work. The family survived by crushing mouldy bread they would find and cooking it with water over a fire. This was their only meal on an almost daily basis.

HUMAN APPEAL'S WORK IN YEMEN

Human Appeal has been changing lives through our projects in Yemen since 2014, and we have maintained a Field Office in the capital of Sana'a since 2016. The breakout of civil war in 2015 brought home the need for us to expand our operations and we have helped over 900,000 people during the course of the conflict, primarily through health projects and emergency food aid to tackle malnutrition.

As a sign of how need has grown since the start of the conflict, in the last quarter of 2019 more than half of the beneficiaries we supported worldwide were in Yemen.

These are just some of the projects we have implemented and ways we have helped people in Yemen since the conflict began:

2015

Provided food for almost 4,500 displaced people, safe drinking water for 7,500 people, and medical protection for 100,000 families against dengue fever.

2016

Delivered food parcels to 1,000 displaced families in Taiz and reached 21,000 people with our Qurbani distribution. We also restarted our orphan sponsorship programme.

2017

Supported hospitals in treating 24,800 people during the cholera outbreak. Provided 10 incubators to the Al-Sabeen Hospital in Sana'a, which helped to treat 700 babies.

2018

Reached 34,738 people through emergency interventions. Gave shelter assistance and NFI kits to 1,400 vulnerable people and winter kits to 390 IDP families.

2019

Provided NFI kits and winter assistance to 1,260 IDPs during our emergency response. Reached 2,946 households with our Qurbani distribution, a total of 20,622 individuals.

2020

Assisted severely food insecure rural households with food supplies. Launched an emergency nutrition project with UN OCHA. Launched COVID-19 emergency response.



THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS IN YEMEN

Yemen is already facing a significant uphill battle to return to where it was even a decade ago. However, as societies across the globe have had to tackle the ongoing spread of Coronavirus, it is already vulnerable and impoverished countries that stand to lose out the most and Yemen has not been spared.

Dr Suad Al-Fahd, working in Epidemiological Surveillance in Yemen's capital Sana'a, says that there are even more reasons to be concerned than first thought as the crisis unfolds:

"I am worried for so many reasons. When it comes to treating people, Yemen is unprepared. We had 200 ventilators for a population of around 30 million at the start of this crisis and some of them didn't even work. We purchased more but we still don't have enough, nor the trained medical staff to use them.

"It is also impossible to find suitable surgical masks and gloves to wear in hospital, and there are no hygienic kits available even for people quarantined in hospital."

But it's not just the virus itself that poses a threat. Suad says she is also worried about the impact that fighting the virus could have on Yemeni people too:

"Malnourished people will be at even more risk from this virus, but as more stay at home to prevent spreading and catching the virus then more people will lose their sources of income and become malnourished themselves. It is a vicious circle. I suspect we will also see a huge increase in the need for psychiatric services as people's mental health deteriorates."

Dr Dhifallah Al-Qady, who has worked as a General Physician and with Human Appeal as a Health Officer during our Cholera outbreak response, is also fearful of the impact the virus could have on Yemen:

"Our issues with war and security mean that our health system has deteriorated and Yemen really will suffer as a result of Coronavirus.

"The situation is made even worse by the fact that so many people are not aware of disease prevention techniques and there is an absence of information which is key to stopping the spread of any virus.

"I am really worried in particular about refugee camps, which are overcrowded. They are meant to be a safe place for people who have escaped conflict, but the virus will spread there so easily and put people in a totally new kind of danger."

Developed countries that have multiple resources at their fingertips are finding the Coronavirus threat to be one of the greatest challenges they have ever faced, so it is sadly unsurprising that medical opinion within Yemen comes with a heightened sense of worry for what the future holds as the virus takes its course.

Yemen is one of the countries that Human Appeal is focusing on during our international COVID-19 Emergency response. COVID-19 has the potential to hit Yemen harder than most other countries because of the large number of people in refugee camps who are unable to properly adhere to social distancing, or the necessary hygiene measures to keep the virus at bay, especially with the mass usage of shared water points that has also led to the spread of Cholera. The hollowed out healthcare sector in Yemen has also meant that the mortality rate from the virus is one of the highest in the world at 28.8%, with 500 deaths following 1,738 positive tests (as of 4th August 2020).¹⁴



Cases are soaring as we get further into summer, and while Human Appeal will do all we can to mitigate the impact of the virus on vulnerable people through distributing our COVID-19 hygiene kits, the conflict, poverty and other challenges facing Yemen's malnourished future generations will no doubt remain after it has passed.

Human Appeal wants to support Yemenis through this pandemic so we can return to our work on tackling the issues perpetuating Yemen's conflict, such as the spread of other diseases, and the

widespread poverty and mass unemployment. We have supported over 900,000 people in Yemen since the outbreak of conflict in 2015, and our ambition for the country is to make real headway in tackling the poverty and health crises that have taken hold, so that the situation can begin to stabilise and allow the Yemeni people to recover. We believe this approach will give Yemenis the best chance of escaping the cycle of poverty and malnutrition, and give future generations the best chance to rebuild their country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the war in Yemen continues unabated, more children are going hungry, growing up with the permanent effects of stunting, wasting, and the missed window of opportunity. So many of the current generations of Yemenis are unable to guarantee they will be able to feed themselves, let alone their newborn children or those in the womb. Entire generations are being starved out of a future.

It is vital that humanitarian actors like Human Appeal are able to help those in need. Despite the outline of the work we have done in this report, it is becoming increasingly difficult to operate in Yemen, which remains stuck in a vicious cycle of conflict and malnutrition, where each exacerbates the other. Without an end to the civil war and the opportunity for humanitarian organisations to act to their full potential, this will only continue.

In light of the current situation in Yemen and our belief that conflict is starving future generations, these are our recommendations to the international community, which we believe are necessary to bring an end to the suffering:

1) There should be no hindrance to humanitarian aid

Governments and other parties to conflict should acknowledge and respect the impartiality of humanitarian organisations.

2) The international community should renew efforts to bring an end to the five-year-long conflict

Yemen is the world's largest humanitarian crisis but also the world's forgotten war. The international community should be at the heart of a peace process.

3) The intentional starving of people should be a war crime

We renew our call from our report 'Hunger as a Weapon of War: How Food Insecurity Has Been Exacerbated in Syria and Yemen', for the international community to support and pursue a prosecution for a war crime against any actor who intentionally prevents food reaching starving people.

ENDNOTES

¹ UN OCHA: Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, available at: <https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2020>

² Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/yemen_en#View=Fit

³ UN OCHA: Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, available at: <https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2020>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UNHCR Operational Update 29 May 2020, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-unhcr-operational-update-29-may-2020>

⁶ UN OCHA: Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, available at: <https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2020>

⁷ 2019 Global Hunger Index, available at: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2019.pdf>

⁸ 1,000 Days, available at: <https://thousanddays.org/why-1000-days/>

⁹ 2019 Global Hunger Index, available at: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2019.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ WFP Yemen Emergency Dashboard January 2020, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-emergency-dashboard-january-2020>

¹² WFP Yemen Emergency Dashboard January 2019, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-emergency-dashboard-january-2019>

¹³ WFP Yemen Country Brief April 2020, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/wfp-yemen-country-brief-april-2020>

¹⁴ WHO: Yemen, available at: <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ye> (Accessed 05/08/2020)



HEAD OFFICE

Human Appeal
Pennine House
Carrs Road
Cheadle, SK8 2BL
United Kingdom

0161 225 0225
humanappeal.org.uk

Charity No. 1154288 | Company Reg No.08553893 | Scottish Reg No. SC046481