



IOM YEMEN QUARTERLY UPDATE

QUARTER 1 JANUARY TO MARCH 2021



SITUATION OVERVIEW

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is deteriorating. According to the 2021 Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview, 20.7 million people require some form of humanitarian and protection assistance, and more than 16.2 million of them face the threat of famine. Worryingly, 5 million people are estimated to be on the verge of famine in the next six months¹. Challenges faced by conflict-affected populations in Yemen are multi-faceted; typically, a combination of food insecurity, displacement, protection risks, economic decline, weather related problems and eroded public systems. The value of the Yemeni rial continues to fluctuate, especially in southern governorates, and remittance payments have yet to return to pre-COVID-19 levels. In the first quarter of the year, IOM estimates that 26,844 people were displaced across 13 governorates² – similar to trends during this period in 2020, when 27,402 people were displaced. Civilian casualties resulting from conflict incidents in communities increased this quarter, and migrants continued to be under threat from not just the conflict, but also from increased detention, forced transfers and deteriorating living conditions. A fire at a migrant holding facility in Sana'a, which took the lives of more than 40 people³, clearly illustrated the dangers for migrant across the country.

The second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak began hitting Yemen hard. By the end of March, there were 4,119 reported cases and 864 associated deaths, with more than half of total cases reported this quarter alone. Although the limited access to testing and surveillance does not allow for a full understanding of the spread of the virus, and locations in the north continue to report only four cases, anecdotal information and analysis from the WHO indicate a concerning situation. Authorities in several locations across the south and Ma'rib have instituted curfews and issued guidance as part of efforts to promote positive behaviour changes to help control the spread of the virus. By the end of March, Yemen received 360,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was the first batch of the 14 million doses that Yemen will receive through the COVAX facility.

³ According to the authorities in Sana'a and the migrant/refugee community.









¹ According to the integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis.

² IOM's DTM only has access to districts in 13 governorates in Yemen.

The conflict in Ma'rib escalated once again in February, this time mostly affecting internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sirwah district to the west of Ma'rib city. Since the offensive was launched, fighting has continued on a near daily basis, displacing 2,625 households (18,375 individuals). IOM estimates that, in total, close to 21,000 households have been displaced in Ma'rib city, Ma'rib Al Wadi and Sirwah since January 2020, between January 2020 and March 2021. Local authorities and humanitarian partners, who were already grappling with limited resources while responding to the needs of some 1 million IDPs across the governorate, are further struggling to meet both the existing and growing needs.

Security incidents such as these have continued to impact humanitarian access, however, the main constraints in Yemen continue to be related to bureaucratic impediments and interference in humanitarian activities. Restrictions on the movement of humanitarian organizations, personnel and goods within and into Yemen is still the most widely reported issue since 2019 – for IOM alone, only one approval to transport aid supplies from Sana'a to locations in need was received this quarter.

In February, IOM released its <u>Crisis Appeal for 2021</u>, seeking donor support for its emergency response, helping to address the acute and growing humanitarian crisis. IOM's priority is to expand programming that tackles the pre-existing drivers of fragility, while also providing frontline multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance in locations where needs are high and the Organization has access.

MA'RIB EMERGENCY RESPONSE

IOM's response to the crisis in Ma'rib has remained a priority in 2021 as fighting continues to drive displacement, destroy infrastructure and worsen the overall humanitarian situation for hundreds of thousands of people. People's lives continue to be impacted every day by fighting and thousands are being displaced from their homes and from IDP hosting sites. In the first quarter of the year, more than 2,700 households have been displaced into Sirwah, Ma'rib city and Ma'rib Al Wadi because of the intensified hostilities in parts of eastern, northern and southern Ma'rib.

The increased hostilities have affected people in Sirwah district the most. Before this surge in conflict activities, Sirwah hosted more than 4,300 displaced families and at least 14 displacement sites. In February and March, IDPs moved from eight displacement sites due to proximity to fighting or because of being directly impacted by it. By the end of March, IDPs had moved mainly to Alrawda (Sirwah) and Al Sowayda IDP hosting sites. Alrawda IDP hosting site is located on flat land in a mountainous area, where there is little vegetation. Prior to the displacement, around 227 families lived in the site, mainly in makeshift tents. The situation is similar in Al Sowayda IDP hosting site, which prior to this recent crisis hosted approximately



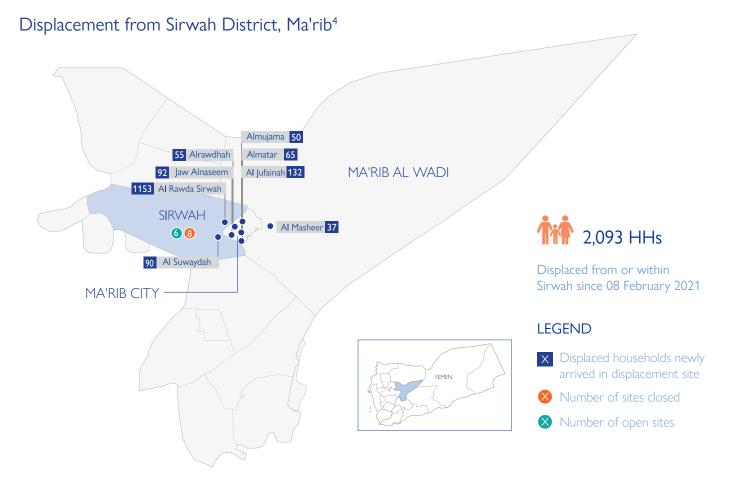
1,163 households. With this new displacement, people are competing for already limited resources: a majority of IDPs are being displaced for the second or third time, and many reported carrying their shelters with them and those who had lived in more permanent dwellings are being hosted by other IDPs in their new site. As both Al Rawda (Sirwah) and Al Sowayda double in size, service provision is inadequate and IDPs are in immediate need of S-NFI and food assistance.

It is unclear if Alrawda and Al Sowayda IDP hosting sites will continue to be safe havens, and IDPs have expressed intentions to move closer to Ma'rib city and Ma'rib Al Wadi, if necessary. This repeated displacement is causing IDPs to become tired and worried for their safety. IOM has been providing WASH support in Sirwah and is coordinating with partners to expand site management and coordination support to the two sites. In Ma'rib city and Ma'rib Al Wadi, IOM has also been providing emergency shelter and NFI assistance to the smaller number of IDPs arriving from Sirwah.



With a team of 18 international and 125 national support and programme staff in Ma'rib as well as nearly 200 community mobilizers and enumerators, IOM is leading response activities, prioritizing critical needs assessments and registering newly arrived IDPs for assistance through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). Together with local authorities, the Organization is coordinating response efforts in Ma'rib through its leadership of the CCCM and Health sub-national clusters, co-leadership of the WASH sub-national cluster, serving as the Ma'rib-based focal point of the protection cluster, and as S-NFI Multi-sectoral Contingency Stock Pipeline manager. In the first quarter of 2021, IOM has registered and reached over 4,760 households with MPCA, provided nearly 2,815 shelters, distributed over 1,588 NFI kits and provided over 181,760 people with safe drinking water.

"We witnessed many accidents, which put people's lives in danger, especially children. This training will give us the knowledge to help save lives," said Abdulbasit, a displaced person who participated in a first aid training organized by IOM in Al Jufainah camp in Ma'rib.



ADVOCACY POINTS

- 1. IOM continues to call for partners to provide a dedicated response in Ma'rib. There are widespread, acute humanitarian needs that are not being met, while increasing displacement is placing further pressure on partners and local authorities. IOM, in line with humanitarian preparedness plans, anticipates further shocks and increased gaps in the months to come. IOM operates a shared humanitarian hub and can provide logistical support and office space to facilitate partner response.
- 2. Maintaining the relative stability of Ma'rib is a priority and IOM is concerned ongoing fighting causing further displacement as well as its general impact on civilians. Those that have influence should continue to advocate for the cessation of hostilities.

⁴ Displacements registered between 08 February and 25 March 2021; only IDP sites which have received more than 30HHs during this period are displayed on the map, and the numbers do not include recent IDP relocations from 4 sites in Sirwah (approximately 513 HH), as registration activities are ongoing



STRANDED MIGRANTS

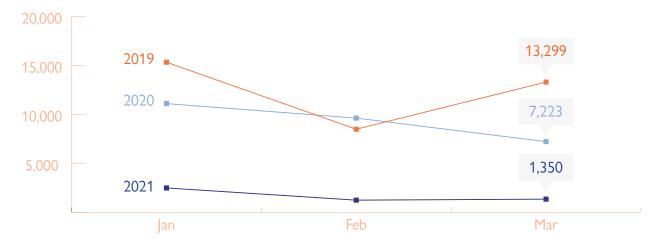
Yemen is a key country on the irregular migration route between the Horn of Africa and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Many migrants arrive in Yemen initially hoping to transit to KSA where they anticipate income and livelihood opportunities but, as a result of continued national and regional COVID-19 movement restrictions, they typically are unable to reach their destination. Since the start of the pandemic, migrant arrivals into Yemen have been at a record low. The trend continues this quarter, where IOM teams recorded 5,113 migrant arrivals departing from Somalia and, to a lesser extent, Djibouti. This is a nearly 82 per cent drop from the same period in 2020 (27,948 migrants) and a 14 per cent increase from the fourth quarter of 2020 (4,413 migrants).

The profile of migrants in Yemen has remained the same, with the majority of migrants (87%) being Ethiopians, and the remaining from Somalia (13%), of whom most are



young boys or men. IOM estimates that some 32,000 migrants are stranded across the country living in dire conditions with no means of returning home due to border closures. The largest groups of stranded migrants are located in the key migrant hubs – Aden, Ma'rib, Sana'a and Sa'dah. These migrants' access to services and support, as well as their well-being and safety, continued to worsen throughout last year, with little-to-no improvement seen in 2021.

Migrant Arrivals in Yemen



In Ma'rib, where IOM estimates that some 5,000 migrants are stranded, there has been another spike in arrivals from the southern coast – some 600 migrants this quarter alone. A majority of migrants arriving in Ma'rib are settling in Batha Bin Mueyli, which is a transit settlement where IOM provides basic assistance, including WASH, NFI and protection services. As the border with KSA is still mostly closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants have been staying at the settlement indefinitely. The increase in new arrivals is putting a strain on WASH services and shelter availability, leading to overcrowding and a general rise in tension between the migrants and with the host community. As the settlement nears full capacity, IOM is considering alternate locations for new arrivals. At the same time, to help alleviate rising tensions, the Organization has organized and trained four community-based protection committees, consisting of both migrants and host community members. This approach will provide a forum for communication and tension resolution between communities.

In northern governorates, IOM and partners receive reports of the deplorable conditions migrants are in, however access to migrant populations, particularly in locations like Sa'dah is very constrained. Thousands of migrants are estimated to be held in detention situations while IOM continues to document the forced relocation of migrants from northern to southern governorates and across frontlines. In Aden, the number of stranded migrants has therefore continued to increase. Many are living on the streets or in makeshift shelters and are seeking options to return home.



Where access has been possible, IOM and partners continued to support migrant populations, focusing on the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance including NFIs, shelter, WASH, food, health care services, and protection support through a migrant centre in Aden and mobile health and protection teams along main transit points on key migratory routes. New initiatives, such as the introduction of food vouchers, and the establishment of cash for work opportunities through a cleaning campaign introduced in 2020 are continuing this year, to further support these stranded migrants with temporary assistance.

"When I go to a restaurant, people tell me to go away. If I sleep on the sidewalk, they say to get up. It's a problem where to sleep or eat." said Abdul, a stranded migrant in Aden, explaining the hardship he lives in Yemen.

FIRE IN MIGRANT FACILITY

On 07 March 2021, a devastating fire broke out at the Immigration, Passports and Naturalization Authority (IPNA) Immigration Holding Facility in Sana'a. The facility was overcrowded on the day of the incident at three times its capacity. With nearly 900 people in whole facility at the time, the hangar affected by the fire was accommodating over 350 people.

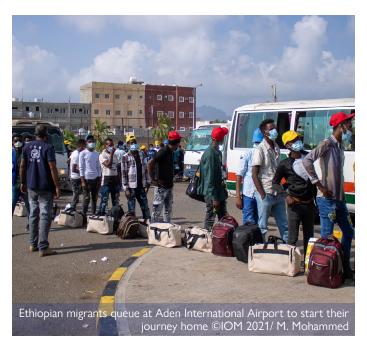
IOM teams were at the facility at the time of the incident and provided rescue support, emergency medical care and transport to hospital for the victims. Over 40 people lost their lives and more than 170 people were injured. Access to the health facilities treating the victims was limited. However, by the end of the quarter IOM had supplied the three hospitals caring for the burn victims, where a small number still remain today, with 30,000 items of medical supplies.

While the exact cause of the fire has not been confirmed, IOM is aware that detained migrants had been protesting the poor living conditions earlier that day, which the guards then attempted to break up. Similar protests had happened on previous occasions given the ongoing inhumane situation. The facility's guards reportedly responded to the unrest with force. The location of the migrants that survived the fire still remains unknown. It is understood that people have sought refuge in Sana'a, and some may have moved towards Aden (both voluntary and forced) and other governorates. By the end of the quarter, the holding facility was still not refilled with detained migrants.

IOM's Director General voiced his condolences on <u>13 March</u> and expressed support for the migrants affected. There is an ongoing investigation being carried out by the authorities in Sana'a. The UN <u>and Member States</u> have called for accountability for those affected including at the UN Security Council on 16 March. Negotiations with the Sana'a authorities on an expedited mechanism to support the voluntary humanitarian return of all those affected by the fire has been underway since March. IOM has presented a plan of action and is engaging at the highest level with the Government of Ethiopia to allow support from Sana'a.

RETURNING TO ETHIOPIA SAFELY

Migrants stranded in Yemen face discrimination, limited access to livelihood opportunities and movement restrictions within and out of Yemen. Because many are unable to reach their destination of KSA, they have shifted their initial plans and are searching instead for ways to return home. IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme to Ethiopia was on hold due to pandemic related restrictions for most of 2020 and as a result, migrants lacked options for safe return. For some migrants, the situation became so dire that they could no longer remain in Yemen and relied on smugglers to get back to the Horn of Africa. IOM DTM recorded over 11,400 migrants making the perilous return journey from Yemen to Djibouti since May 2020, risking their lives once again at sea and in the desert. Despite the reduced numbers of migrants travelling to Yemen, dangers also exist on the route, which was clearly shown by a boat incident off the coast of Djibouti in March causing the death at least 5 people. In the first quarter of 2021, IOM, in coordination with the Government of Ethiopia, resumed



the VHR programme. The first flight since the start of the pandemic took off on 16 March, supporting the safe return of 140 Ethiopian migrants from Aden, Yemen. In total, IOM has registered over 6,200 stranded migrants who are seeking to return through this programme. In December 2020, the Government of Ethiopia sent a delegation to Aden to verify an initial group of 1,100 returnees. The flight was the first in the initial group, and regular flights are planned in the coming quarter to cover the remaining caseload.



Prior to departure, IOM carries out medical and protection screenings to ensure that returnees are safe and fit to travel, while those with special needs are identified and supported. The Organization also provides clothing and hygiene items to those in need. In coordination with the Ethiopian government, IOM supports the government-run COVID-19 quarantine facility set up to accommodate the returnees in Addis Ababa and provides cash assistance, essential items and onward transportation assistance to their homes. The Organization also supports family tracing and the reunification of unaccompanied migrant children. With thousands of other migrants stranded elsewhere in Yemen, including Ma'rib, IOM hopes to extend its return efforts soon. Across the Horn of Africa and Yemen, IOM provides life-saving support to migrants through health care, food, water and other assistance.

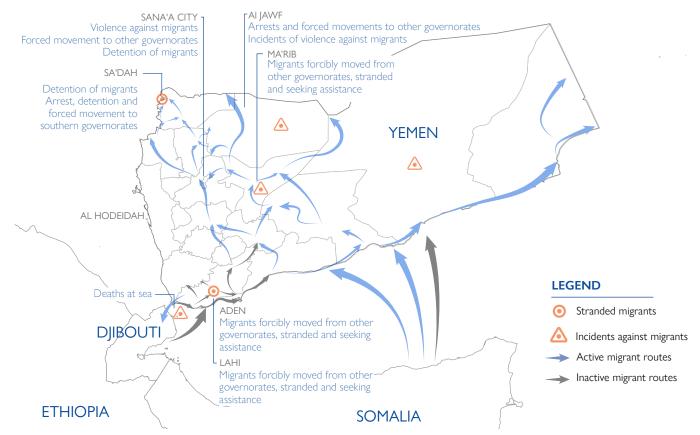
"I have a family to provide for in Ethiopia, so I left to find work. I came to Yemen to make it to Saudi Arabia, but I was not successful," said Mohammed Awal, one of the 140 Ethiopian migrants who were assisted through VHR. "I can't describe my situation here, as it has been very difficult. I have been homeless and poor. I am happy to be going home but I have nothing to bring back to my family. I will never leave again."

IOM YEMEN'S KEY ASKS

- COVID-19 restrictions should not be used as justification to carry out migrant encampment, detention or forced transfers. IOM, in coordination with partners, continues advocacy against discriminatory treatment of migrants while helping them access basic services.
- Migrants should be afforded freedom of movement and should not be subject to forced transfers or arbitrary detention.
- The detention of migrants should only take place as a last resort and in humane and safe conditions. Due to the crisis in Yemen, such conditions cannot be reached or maintained. IOM advocates for alternatives to detention to be sought and for migrants currently being detained to be released.
- Stranded migrants must be given protection, including to safely return home. IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme is a life-line for stranded migrants; authorities along the route need to work together to increase the number of people who are able to safely return home.
- Humanitarians must be granted unconditional access to all populations in need, including migrants.

Migration Trends

SAUDI ARABIA





COVID-19 RESPONSE

4,119 Reported cases

864 Reported deaths

1,659 Reported recovered

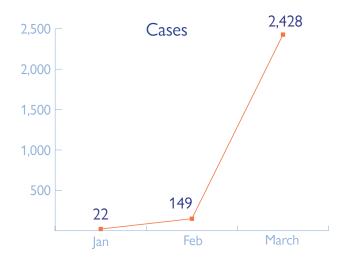
About a year since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Yemen the country is grappling with a second wave of the virus which is further devastating communities. Of the 4,119 confirmed cases by the end of March, more than half were reported in the first quarter of 2021. The case fatality rate has remained at an average of 21 per cent, and health experts attribute this to the limited testing and surveillance capacities along with far greater incidents of people seeking care at the later stages of the disease. The highest number of cases have been reported in Hadramawt, Aden and Ta'iz, where there are more dedicated testing capacities – in fact these governorates are carrying out tests for cases in surrounding areas. In the north of the country, only four COVID-19 cases have been reported, although there are anecdotal and informal indications that cases are rising there too.

IOM, together with the humanitarian community, has continued to prioritize surveillance and testing, risk communication and community engagement and the procurement and prepositioning of critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment. Given the urgency of behavioral changes aimed at reducing community level transmission, awareness raising on prevention and transmission is streamlined across all IOM programming. The Organization is also working on increasing access to testing where there is none – six GeneXpert machines are being deployed to underserved areas like Ta'iz and Ma'rib. The GeneXpert systems are suitable for establishing immediate COVID-19 testing capacity in locations with limited infrastructure: the technology is easy to transport and set up and requires minimal training. In the longer-term, these may be replaced with real time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing systems. In Ta'iz, 10 lab technicians were also trained on sample collection and processing and have since supported testing at the Al Makha COVID-19 treatment centre. So far, lab technicians have conducted 268 COVID-19 tests using the machine; of which 129 tested positive.

IOM health teams have also continued case continuity and case management, as well as infection, prevention and control (IPC) efforts that aim to mitigate the impact of the virus. The Organization is supporting 13 static primary and secondary health facilities and six mobile clinics in six governorates; this has included ensuring that facilities have adequate medical and personal protective equipment to carry out critical services. At the same time, trainings for health workers and community health volunteers continue to incorporate case management and IPC, providing frontline workers with the tools to respond to the outbreak. Finally, as part of efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19 in 32 IDP hosting sites across Yemen, IOM's CCCM team supported displaced women to make facemasks for their communities; this quarter, 150 displaced women, in 12 displacement sites were supported to produce 4,690 face masks, which were distributed along with 872 community shielding kits and mosquito nets. Risk communication and community engagement activities also reached more than 150,000 people.

"I spent nearly eight full days making masks and I was able to produce 150. When I finished, I received an incentive from IOM and bought some goods for my brother so that he can sell them in his kiosk and earn money for his medicine," said Asmaa, a displaced woman who took part in IOM's mask-making initiative to combat the spread of COVID-19 in Ibb.

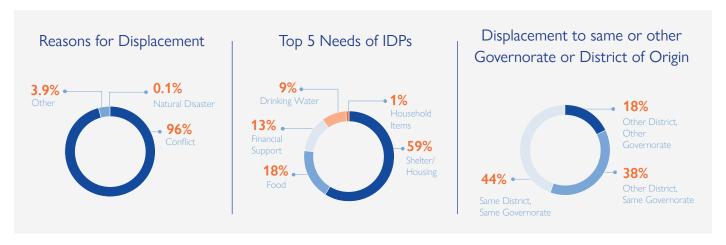
REPORTED COVID-19 CASES







DISPLACEMENT TRENDS



The DTM team uses Rapid Displacement Tracking (RDT) to collect data on the number of Yemeni households forced to flee on a daily basis. This allows DTM to produce regular displacement reports in terms of numbers, location and needs. RDT data does not capture whether displacement is new or multiple (households displaced from another displacement location), instead it monitors displacement that occurs due to conflict, natural disaster or other reasons. Moving into 2021, conflict continued to be the main driver of displacement across hotspots in Ma'rib, Ta'iz and Ad Dali', with 85 per cent of the total displaced population being in those three governorates and Ma'rib making half of all the displaced. IOM teams, operating across 13 governorates, 118 districts and over 1,249 locations in Yemen, where they have access, estimate that 26,844 people were displaced during this quarter, which is comparable to the number of displaced during the last quarter of 2020 (27,402 people). Of all the people tracked, approximately 59 per cent reported that they lacked access to adequate shelter, with food (18%), financial support (13%), drinking water (9%) and other services (1%) including non-food items and health services.

In this quarter, IOM efforts to launch the multi-cluster location assessment (MLCA) progressed positively in southern governorates, while negotiations picked back up in northern governorates. In the south, trainings and household listing exercises were completed, while data collection and analysis are on track to take place during the second quarter of the year. In the north, negotiations continue around a number of contentious issues and IOM stands ready to kickstart the exercise as soon this is possible. The MCLA has been used to assess IDP needs in previous years and this year has been broadened to include all key population groups that are in need of humanitarian assistance as per previous findings from the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). The MCLA uses a structured questionnaire that seeks to identify the demographic profile of geographic locations (villages and neighbourhoods) displacement dynamics; the vulnerabilities, needs, and coping strategies of the targeted population groups; and the level of community engagement and of accountability to affected populations.

IOM also started efforts to carry out an Area Assessment in Ma'rib and the south. The Area Assessment is a tool used to track and monitor IDP and returnee population stock data in Yemen. Data is collected on population size, area of origin, current location, duration of displacement, shelter types, priority needs and movement trends. Since the last assessment in 2018, the tool has been updated to improve analysis, and new training material has been developed. In March, the revised Area Assessment piloted in Ma'rib governorate; data collection activities have just been completed and a report will be released in the next guarter. In June, the first round of the assessment will be launched across southern governorates, and thereafter be carried out on quarterly basis.





ENHANCED PREPAREDNESS FOR ACUTE SHOCKS

IOM is managing the Multi-sectoral Contingency Stock Pipeline with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to deliver timely life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations in Yemen, prioritizing newly displaced and highly vulnerable IDPs. Via the Pipeline, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have access to critical emergency shelter materials and non-food items (NFIs), as well as basic hygiene supplies and fuel to ensure critical water trucking functions are maintained. Through IOM's warehouses in four governorates and DRC's in three northern governorates, the nationwide pipeline reduces the duplication of assistance and allows for a localized response that is enhanced by regular cluster coordination.

This quarter, IOM and partners coordinated with OCHA's Operations Centre to provide basic humanitarian assistance to nearly 1,562 households affected by conflict and natural disaster. IOM and pipeline partners distributed 971 emergency shelter kits, 1,033 NFI kits, 148 family tents, 50 emergency latrines and 17,823.5 liters of diesel to WASH facilities serving vulnerable populations through six partners in six governorates. To support the efficiency of the Pipeline and inform course correction moving into 2021, IOM coordinated with third party monitors in the latter part of 2020, and findings have contributed to learning outcomes, informed by a series of field visits, beneficiary surveys and key informant interviews.

As co-lead of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) sector with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), IOM supports an integral component of the frontline humanitarian response in Yemen. Within the first ten days of displacement, and after receiving in-kind RRM kits from UNFPA and partners, IDPs receive one-off emergency multi-purpose cash assistance, provided by IOM and other sector partners. MPCA allows IDPs to meet their most urgent needs immediately following displacement. Through this mechanism, IOM provided 5,653 newly displaced households with MPCA this quarter.

"It was very hard for us whenever our flow of water would be interrupted. We had no way of storing water for these emergencies. The storage tanks are a solution to our problems. Now, we are prepared for any possible future water shortages and we can also keep the water clean," said Hassan, a displaced person who received water tanks as part of IOM's WASH support in Maneen Al Hadad Displacement Site in Ma'rib.





SUPPORT TO SOCIOECONOMIC RECOVERY

Despite the ongoing conflict, regions of stability exist in Yemen where there are opportunities to encourage and maintain development gains. IOM is helping to set the foundation for inclusive and sustainable political, social and economic development by working directly with local partners and communities to bridge divides and resolve conflicts in support of holistic community planning and needs prioritization.

This is done through activities including the rehabilitation and construction of schools and other core infrastructure, supporting livelihood opportunities to increase household incomes and building local capacities to resolve community-level conflicts. IOM also carries out capacity building of local stakeholders and supports the generation of livelihoods and income opportunities for conflict-affect populations.

In the first quarter of 2021, IOM continued these transition and recovery activities in Ma'rib, Lahj, Aden and Hadramawt governorates and initiated over 30 infrastructure rehabilitation projects in education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and health sectors. IOM also conducted consultations with target communities ahead of complementary capacity building activities. The consultations aimed to identify key stakeholders to engage in capacity building in order to sustain the supported services in the longer term.

In Hadramawt, IOM—in partnership with local water user associations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—conducted awareness-raising activities with local community members in Wadi Thabi district. The activities focused on the importance of engaging women and youth in peaceful conflict resolution, particularly in relation to water conflicts. Additionally, IOM continues to scale up its programming in the west coast to where there are also opportunities to carry out social cohesion and capacity building initiatives for IDPs, migrants and host communities. Two technical assessments were completed in Ta'iz and Al Hodeidah including key informant interviews, on-site consultation visits and meeting with local authorities.

"In Al Jufainah Camp, there are five schools but all of them are temporary ones made of prefabs or tents," said Abdullah Shadad, head of the Project Development unit in the Ministry of Education, explaining the importance of the primary school being constructed by IOM near the camp which will improve access to education for 800 children.



IOM'S WORK IN YEMEN IS SUPPORTED BY























