

Aden, October 2023

Millions still struggling to survive in Yemen, as the cost of food soars 300%, humanitarian actors warn.

One year since the non-renewal of the formal truce in Yemen we, the undersigned 48 organizations, call for urgent action to address the deteriorating economic crisis affecting civilians across Yemen, but particularly in areas controlled by the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG).

For the last eight years and since the conflict escalated in 2015, Yemen's economy has steadily declined. Today, it is on the verge of collapse.¹ While economic challenges are rife across the country, rising inflation and the deterioration of public services are making life unbearable for hundreds of thousands of families in IRG- controlled areas. Power stations are shutting down due to a lack of fuel and high prices as refineries are not operating. As a result, power outages in Aden are reaching 17 hours per day, amid soaring temperatures, impacting service provision and economic activity. The irregularity and delays in the payment of public wages remains a major issue across the country. Across southern governorates, schools struggled to reopen in September because of teacher strikes over pay, disrupting access to education for thousands of children. While protests have been ongoing the past eight years, in recent weeks, they have gained renewed momentum with demonstrators taking to the streets to protest severe living conditions, calling for "bread, water, and power."

As of August 2023, more than 50% of households in IRG-controlled areas are unable to meet their basic food requirements as the price of a minimum food basket – food a family needs to survive for a month - has increased by nearly 300% in the past five years.² Basic food prices have also surged exponentially. For instance, the cost of wheat has increased 400 percent – from 9,500 YER in 2018 to 35,400 YER per 50 kilos today.³ As families struggle to put food on the table, malnutrition increased in 2023 compared to 2022.⁴

Fatma, a 50-year-old single mother from Aden said: "My little children beg me to take them to school. They don't understand that I can't buy them lunch, let alone books and clothes. My husband died a few years ago, and we were left with nothing. Sometimes I have to go out and beg for money."

The economic downturn has led to high levels of unemployment and poverty. Hundreds of businesses have been disrupted or destroyed during the conflict, leaving many without livelihoods opportunities. With the average monthly salary at 60,000 YER - approximately US \$42 - families are struggling to cover half of their food needs for a month, even before costs such as water, fuel, and medical care. Across the south, the value of the Yemeni Riyal (YER) has dropped more than 28 percent against the dollar in the past 12 months alone. This is further impacting the affordability of essential food and medical care.

Fighting has markedly decreased since the truce, which expired on 2 October 2022, yet competition over revenue from ports, trade, banking, and natural resources and sporadic armed clashes are increasing tensions. Parties to the conflict continue to resort to economic tactics which have inflicted hardships on civilians, particularly across southern governorates. These include the implementation of competing

¹ https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/multidimensional_poverty_in_yemen-ry_0.pdf

² Food Security Cluster, August 2023.

³ Food Security Cluster, August 2023.

⁴ Yemen: IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Snapshot – Acute Malnutrition October 2022 – September 2023

monetary policies and excessive exchange and remittance fees. The fragmentation of the Central Bank of Yemen has led to conflicting policies, double taxation, and two separate currencies, impacting intra-Yemeni trade in goods and services.

The critical ports in Aden and Mukalla, essential for the import and export of goods, continue to experience delays, and security challenges, impacting the flow of vital food and medical supplies.⁵ Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive social protection system has reduced the ability of families to cope with economic shocks and compounded the crisis. As parties fail to agree on measures to stabilize the economic situation, including the payment of public salaries, thousands more households could experience further suffering and face extreme hunger.

Across the country, women and children are disproportionately impacted. Women often eat least and last, giving priority to children and other family members, and are further exposed to risks and experience the highest levels of all forms of violence. Girls are at increased risk of early marriage to reduce the number of family members to feed, and as a source of income. Increasingly, people in Yemen are being forced to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as begging for food and money. While children are at increased risk of child labour and begging and may be forced to drop out of school.

To address the deteriorating economic crisis, and alleviate the suffering of civilians, we call for the following urgent actions to be taken:

- The IRG, with support from the international community must take concrete measures to resolve the power crisis and ensure access to basic services, including healthcare, sanitation, water, and education, in coordination with local actors. This must include funding and support for social protection systems, especially for those at risk of food insecurity.
- Parties to the conflict should cooperate to respond to the needs of all Yemenis, including regular public sector salary payments nationwide, affordable basic commodities, the resumption of exports, a functional banking system and facilitating commercial activity.
- The international community should support a fully funded economic recovery plan to stabilise the economy and prevent further food price rises, as well as provide foreign reserves to subsidize commercial imports of food and fuel.
- Donors must fund the 70 percent gap in the humanitarian response for critical sectors including protection, health, education, and disburse existing pledges. Donors should operationalise a humanitarian-development nexus approach and support durable solutions to strengthen resilience and self-reliance.
- Parties to conflict should continue to negotiate towards an inclusive, sustainable peace to prevent further deterioration of the economy.

Yemen is at a critical juncture. Concerted efforts by parties to the conflict and the international community are needed now to support stability, peace, and prosperity.

Signed,

Yemeni Civil Society Organisations

1. Abs Development Organization for Woman & Child (ADO)

⁵ [WFP facing critical funding shortage in Yemen threatening vital food assistance | World Food Programme](#)

2. Abyan Youth Foundation
3. Al Amal Development Association – Shabwa
4. Al-Twasul for Human Development
5. Al-Zahra Development Foundation (ZDF)
6. Amal Organization for Relief and Development
7. Angela for Development and Humanitarian Response
8. Arab Human Rights Foundation
9. Basamat Development Foundation
10. Benevolence Coalition for Humanitarian
11. Best Future Foundation
12. Democracy School
13. Enqath Foundation for Development (EFD)
14. Fanar Aden Foundation for Humanitarian Works
15. Hemmat Shabab Foundation for Development
16. Humanitarian Work Library – Yemen
17. I Am for My Country Foundation
18. Make Hope Development and Relief
19. Medical Mercy Foundation
20. Muzun Charity Foundation
21. Mysarah Foundation for Development
22. Nasaem Development Corporation
23. Neda'a Foundation for Development
24. Ola Al-Majd for Development
25. Qudrah Organization for Sustainable Development
26. Rawabi Alnahdah Foundation
27. Social Kind Eart Foundation SKEF
28. Tamdeen Youth Foundation
29. The Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Al-Muftah District
30. Tomorrow Foundation for Sustainable and Humanitarian Relief
31. Wathiqun Foundation for Development
32. Weaam Empowerment Foundation
33. White Hands Association Women Development Charity
34. Yamany Foundation for Development and Humanitarian Works (YDH)
35. Yemen International Agency for Development

International Non-Government Organisations

1. Action for Humanity International
2. CARE
3. CIVIC
4. Danish Refugee Council
5. Geneva Call
6. GiveDirectly
7. International Rescue Committee
8. Muslim Hands
9. Norwegian Refugee Council

10. OXFAM
11. People in Need
12. Save the Children
13. War Child UK