

JOINT STATEMENT:
IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE NEEDED - YEMENI CIVILIANS CANNOT TAKE ANY MORE SUFFERING

International humanitarian agencies in Yemen are urgently calling on all warring parties for an immediate ceasefire in Sana'a. Escalating clashes between forces aligned with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the Houthis are trapping civilian populations across Yemen's governorates and exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian situation. The Yemeni population simply cannot take any more blows.

Dozens of people are believed to have died in five days of intense fighting which has heavily restricted the movement of people within Sana'a and other areas. Violent clashes across Sana'a and surrounding governorates have forced civilians into hiding and left much of the city's population without access to services. Ambulances and medical teams cannot access the injured, and people cannot go out to buy food and other basic supplies. This comes on top of dire situation given the recent price increase and exacerbated situation in the country. All humanitarian operations have been forced to cease pending improved security.

Johan Mooij, Country Director CARE International in Yemen currently in hibernation, said: "You can hear the gun shots, RPG firing, and the tanks meters away as we spend most of our day taking shelter in the basement."

Mutasim Hamdan, Country Director for Norwegian Refugee Council, said: "Even those who dodge the shelling could die as prisoners in their own homes. As the violence intensifies, what little water and food people have left are being rapidly depleted. Our staff and the people we serve are all on lockdown. Until the violence subsides, basic needs cannot be met.

"Moreover, due to the ongoing blockade there is still a desperate lack of fuel in country which is compounding the impact of the crisis, added Hamdan."

Following the 23-day blockade of Yemen's most critical ports last month, the acceleration of violence in Sana'a and other major cities throughout Yemen has dealt another severe hit to the people of Yemen. The lives of millions of Yemenis were already in jeopardy as a consequence of an almost three-year war that has stripped most of access to food, water and medicine. Now, with millions across Sana'a and other cities trapped in their homes, more will risk death from violence or hunger.

Shane Stevenson, Oxfam's Country Director in Yemen, said: "The escalated violence is impeding our life saving operations as our staff take shelter from shelling. The international community needs to urgently pressure all sides to end this horror in Yemen and bring immediate relief.

"How long will the Yemeni peoples' calls for help fall on deaf ears? All parties involved in this bloodshed and those supporting parties to the conflict, have a responsibility to stop these horrors, and save the lives of millions of Yemeni children, women and men, added Stevenson."

The undersigned organisations call on all parties to agree an immediate ceasefire, and allow unimpeded access for urgently needed humanitarian assistance. We further call on the international community, particularly those with influence over parties to the conflict and members of the Security Council, to act immediately to bring about a political solution on Yemen.

Undersigned organisations

CARE International

Norwegian Refugee Council

Oxfam International

Save the Children