



# Yemen Country Profile

## Urban Context

Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world, and it has suffered from numerous conflicts and civil wars in recent history. The majority of the nation's population is rural and resides in tribal areas. The current population is more than 5 times larger than the 1950 population of 4.3 million. The population is also young, with almost half of Yemenis being under the age of 15.

More than six years of war has pushed Yemen into famine, uprooted millions of people from their homes, destroyed the economy and fostered the spread of diseases, including COVID-19. A protracted economic blockade and the collapse of basic services and public institutions has compounded the suffering of people in Yemen, drastically increasing needs while humanitarian funding remains insufficient.

Protracted emergencies and their associated recurrent needs, coupled with funding shortages, have led the humanitarian response to focus on immediate human-made and natural disaster response without focusing enough on the need for mid to long-term sustainable shelter solutions such as transitional shelters, house repairs or low-cost housing programs necessary to improve the living situation of IDPs stranded in displacement locations or facilitate return where feasible. Additionally, inadequate WASH services and facilities at health facilities and schools is a significant gap and a future risk in the delivery of healthcare services and education.

Preparedness for rapid onset acute emergencies, especially flash floods, is one of the challenges observed, and there is a need for a country-wide early warning system based on rainfall forecasts and flood hotspot assessments in reference to hydrology and residential patterns.



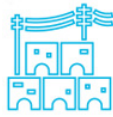
Recognized as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises for the past half decade, around 20.7 million people in Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection and over 4 million people are internally displaced, making this the world's fourth largest internally displaced population.



Total population is 30.8 million



38.5 % of the population is urban



60% of urban population live in slum areas



33.7% of youth are unemployed



16M lack access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene



23.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance



4.3 million are internally displaced, 79% are women and children



7.4 million are in need of Shelter/ Non-Food Items (51% higher than in 2021)



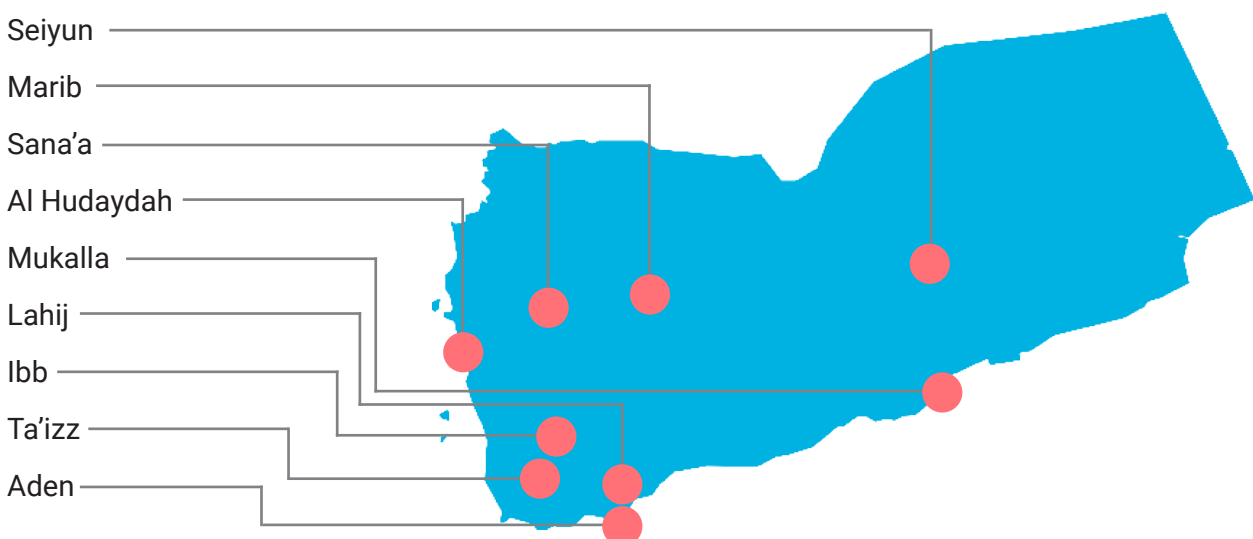
only 50 % of Yemen's health facilities are functional



234 schools were destroyed, and 1270 schools were damaged as a result of the conflict

**The impact of the conflict is urban.** Even though key cities have faced severe destruction, secondary and tertiary cities have become ports for “reverse” population movements, transforming them into hosting areas for IDPs. This influx is putting additional strain on existing services and infrastructure that are already scarce or depleted. In the context of a protracted crisis in Yemen, key future issues that should be addressed relate to peace and stability. Once the conflict comes to an end, the country must go through a nationwide reconstruction operation, which should take into consideration avoiding past mistakes and building cities and towns that are safer, more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Hence, it is vital to address urban challenges today and derive immediate, medium, and long-term responses towards recovery.

## MAP OF SELECTED URBAN CENTRES IN YEMEN



# UN-Habitat in Yemen



Since establishing a presence in Yemen in 2018, UN-Habitat has implemented numerous projects spanning the HDP nexus:

- **The Rapid City and Neighborhood Profiling** Towards a Development Oriented Urban Recovery Process in Yemen contributed to better targeted and coordinated humanitarian, recovery, and development investments to strengthen the resilience of stakeholders and affected populations in 8 Cities: Sana`a, Aden, Taiz, Ma`rib, Al Hudaydah governorate, Sa`dah, Zinjibar, Al Hawtah. As a result of the project, the “State of Yemeni Cities 2020” report was produced for 10 cities: Sana`a, Aden, Taiz, Ibb, Al Mukalla, Ma`rib, AlHodeidah, Sa`dah, Zinjibar, Al Hawtah, examining the challenges of the 10 Yemeni cities across 7 sectors.
- UN-Habitat supported the most vulnerable communities and conflict-affected IDP families **to have access to safe sanitation in three IDP camps** in Al Hudaydah Governorate. 63 units of hygienic public pit latrine and 2 communal latrines were constructed in Al Alily formal and informal camps and Al Hyma informal IDP sites in Al Khawkha and Al Tuhayta districts. These units serve 1,399 individuals.
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- Through the **rehabilitation of 148 damaged houses** in Al Khawkha and Al Tuhayta districts, UN-Habitat has secured access to adequate housing to around 900 persons including 619 female-headed households, widows, and girls.
- To **prevent spread of cholera and other water-borne diseases, as well as to mitigate the risk of COVID-19**, UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Taybah Foundation for Development trained a group of volunteers on COVID-19 awareness-raising among IDPs in Al Alili camp, Al Hudaydah Governorate. 6,600 beneficiaries have been addressed through the campaign, and the hygiene kits (COVID-19 kits) were distributed to 3,000 project beneficiaries and some close neighbors in Qataba and Al Hyma.

**US\$ 6,000,000**

Total Value of Ongoing Projects

**6**

Number of Active Projects in 2023

- In Aden, the living conditions of 75,000 persons Cholera affected communities were improved through **rehabilitated/extended more than 7900-meter length of water and wastewater pipelines** (different sizes), including fittings, valves, accessories and manholes, increased socio-economic opportunities, and empowered communities.
- **Increased access to lifesaving water and sanitation facilities** for displaced population and host community in Ad Durayhimi and Bait Al-Faqih Districts in Al Hudaydah governorate. Safe drinking and domestic water had been secured for 13,800 IDPs and most vulnerable host communities individuals through the rehabilitation of sources of water (well) with pumps installation via solar systems, water network pipes, and installation of water points. The project also aimed at improving the health conditions of women, girls, and boys of the IDPs in informal settlements through construction of 421 new latrines and sanitation facilities.

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



**“ ... the house was not safe to live in. I felt helpless, I had no idea how to rebuild the house on my own and with no source of income.”**

When fighting broke out in Yemen’s West Coast Districts at the end of 2017, Mariam Saleh and her family’s house was hit by shells. After Mariam’s sister was killed, she took her and her sister’s children to safety in a nearby village, remaining displaced for four months. When they returned in May 2018, they found their home had been completely destroyed. “The walls and the roof fell off and the house had no doors or windows,” Mariam said. “The roof could not protect us from the rain anymore and the house was not safe to live in. I felt helpless, I had no idea how to rebuild the house on my own and with no source of income.” Mariam regained hope when she heard that her house would be rebuilt as part of a UN-Habitat project, supported by the Government of Japan, with a focus on women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Job opportunities were provided by engaging individuals in the repair and rehabilitation works of their homes. “Our home has become safe to live in,” Mariam commented after UN Habitat rehabilitated the entire house. The house was now provided with electricity, lighting and a ceiling fan, all operating via solar power, in an effort to give Mariam a chance at overcoming the devastation she’d gone through because of war and displacement.

# LIFE-SAVING HOUSING REHABILITATION FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES



24 months



US\$ 10,000,000



Aden, Al Hudaydah, Marib, Ta'izz, and Lahij



Ministry of Public Works and Housing



1,000 IDP families, including at least 3,000 unemployed young people

## Purpose

Housing reconstruction and rehabilitation in Yemen is essential from a rights-based recovery approach. It is also essential for return, and for a renewed social contract based on citizen-state trust, social cohesion, private sector-led growth, and sustainable development. A holistic support system is needed to allow at-risk populations, a dignified return to their communities; and for communities to be stabilized to support sustainable peace and avoid a return to divisive sectarianism and separatism. Individual interventions need to be complemented by community programmes and approaches, which address underlying causes of violent extremism, including exclusion, poor service delivery and governance, marginalization, and poverty with the aim of easing tensions, and reducing the frustration that can be conducive to conflict.

Ultimately, citizens need to regain their faith in institutions that address their needs, including to deliver basic services. It is of great value, to strengthen the nexus between “humanitarian”/ lifesaving, peace building and early recovery/ development. While life-saving activities such as rehabilitation of severely damaged housing remain critical in the current context. However, to strengthen stabilization and peace building; the development agencies will remain essential in providing much needed medium-term technical assistance and reconstruction investments, such as addressing housing finance needs, HLP rights for those who have fled their homes during the conflict and returned at a later stage. This should be combined with close coordination with local authorities to develop urban recovery and development plans.

## Project Description

The project addresses the key challenges that requires immediate response:

- Large scale of housing damage will require solutions that can deliver at equivalent scale. Pre-crisis housing policies in Yemen, resulted in a significant deficit of housing availability. Delivering adequate housing at scale in such contexts will be a major challenge.

- Lack of usable housing stock is increasing rent prices, making decent housing unaffordable for the poorest displaced families. In protracted conflicts such as Yemen, hosting has been a major coping mechanism, but is not sustainable.
- Loss or damage to civil documentation or property rights evidence is a barrier to return and reconstruction.

### **Project Strategy**

The project will focus on the urgent housing rehabilitation needs where locations are identified through satellite imagery and verified on the site. The selection criteria will be agreed upon with the UN agencies and local authorities for the selection of the most affected neighborhoods, and the suggested intervention is based on:

- **The City Profiling and assessing physical damage:** undertaking damage assessments in urban areas through satellite imagery, site visits and field corroborations designed to ensure the proper targeting and prioritization of interventions for both humanitarian and development actors and local authorities as they plan their interventions. The mapping of damage categories will be critical in identifying areas of need and orienting urgent housing rehabilitation works.
- **Repairing and rehabilitating war-damaged houses:** creating job opportunities through community builders and deploying local contractors for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing. Vulnerability criteria, defined in close coordination with the Shelter and Protection Clusters. Interventions may include where needed the upgrading of community and municipal social services and facilities.
- **Establishing permanent low-cost core housing unit sites and installing core housing unit in-situ:** To accommodate vulnerable returnees and tenants whose houses are destroyed, establish shelter sites equipped with low-cost core housing units and basic infrastructure and install core unit in-situ. These low-cost modular core housing units can be incrementally expanded if required, providing affordable and durable shelter solutions to returnees, and thereby facilitating their reintegration to and rebuilding of lives in the areas they return to.

### **Main Expected Accomplishments**

- Robust needs and damage assessments and clear prioritization and targeting criteria are established with the local authorities.
- Planning and implementation of shelter reconstruction is carried out through effective participation of the affected communities, community-based and self-help housing reconstruction, cash-for-work initiatives.
- Livelihoods opportunities for the skilled and unskilled local labor through use of labor-intensive technologies are created.
- Gender mainstreaming adopted for beneficiary selection and project implementation, through prioritization of vulnerable female-headed households.
- Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights are restored where property and ownership documents are lost to ensure that HLP rights of returnees are addressed through means such as provision of legal support, verification and recognition of occupancy rights, advocacy, and capacity development support.

# LIFE-SAVING HOUSING REHABILITATION FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES



36 months



US\$ 5,000,000



Aden and Ta'izz



Ministry of Public Works and Housing



- Vulnerable IDP families who left severely damaged homes
- Returnees who suffer partial or complete damage of their homes
- Local government employees
- Construction and engineering associations

## Purpose

Conflicts generate significant volumes of debris in cities, the management of which is a critical issue in the transition from emergency response to recovery and reconstruction. Failure to develop and implement an effective debris management plan can increase security risks due to the failure to remove UXOs/ERWs, impede economic recovery, delay returns of IDPs, and undermine the delivery of urban basic services. Conversely, an effective debris management plan can create significant employment, strengthening the nexus between humanitarian/lifesaving, peace building and early recovery/development. The debris management plan would also enable returns and the implementation of multi-sector area-based plans within an overall Urban Recovery Framework.

## Project Description

This project is crucial to:

- Conduct the necessary surveys to measure the quantification of the debris, current status, and locations severely impacted and most dangerous to prioritize as action areas on a comprehensive national level. A work to be conducted in collaboration with IOM and UNHCR as well as other UN agencies.
- Map stakeholders and conduct training and capacity building needs assessment for public entities, local government, and involved ministries departments or representatives, in addition to NGOs and private sector (e.g., contractors and consultancy groups), as well as available mass labors of the in-situ IDPs and returnees.
- Develop special solid waste management for hazardous materials.

## Project Strategy

The project will be conducted in coordination with IOM and UNHCR as well as other UN agencies and will target Aden and Taiz. The following activities will be conducted:

- Development of Guidance Notes on enabling institutional, legal and policy framework for debris management, building on an assessment of current situation. The policy aspects of HLP rights, UXO/ERW contamination and labor-based approaches would be incorporated.
- Production of Guidance Note on city-based Debris Management Master Plan, including tools to assess the scale and methods of debris management (recycling, transporting, and dumping), capacity assessment and building tools targeting all local government caliber levels.
- Deciding on the most appropriate/ affected pilot 2 districts in two cities to implement as a catalyst project, which implicate detailed stakeholder survey for a participatory approach in planning and implementation.
- Adopt a participatory approach, expand in involving local community as much as possible for effective planning and implementation.
- Adopting labor-intensive approach.
- Prioritization of roads leading to disaster zones as areas of work (e.g., roads leading to areas where there is cholera breakout).
- Working in coordination with the 'installation of WASH Infrastructure and solid waste management project' for the solid waste management module.
- Cross-cutting issues such as: no-harm approach, gender perspective, youth and human rights will be taken into consideration.

## Main Expected Accomplishments

- Debris situation is assessed with a quantitative estimation.
- Local government members are supported to increase their awareness of different aspects of debris management, mainly conducting essential surveys, developing legal framework, programme implementation and mass- labor management.
- Awareness is raised about UXO/ERW contamination, handling its clearance effectively.
- Job opportunities through training of local communities in action areas for sustainable livelihood opportunities for returnees are provided.
- Health and environment risks associated with debris management provided, as well as the technical guidance on environmental and social sitting requirements for debris recycling, transfer and disposal.
- Expedite the transition from the life-saving to the reconstruction (housing rehabilitation and HLP, etc.) activities.