



FAMINE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT 2021

VIRTUAL HIGH-LEVEL EVENT: ACTION IN SUPPORT OF PREVENTING AND ENDING FAMINE NOW



Photo: OCHA/Damilola Onafuwa

Yemen

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The risk of famine continues to threaten millions of people across Yemen. Over 16 million people – more than half of the population – are acutely food insecure (IPC 3+) and 5 million people are estimated to be living on the brink of starvation (IPC 4).

These critical hunger levels are primarily the result of Yemen's collapsing economy, which is itself a consequence of more than six years of conflict. With the country's high reliance on imports and the continued depreciation of the currency, food prices are being pushed beyond the reach of most ordinary Yemenis. The price of the minimum food basket has increased by more than 260 per cent since 2015 and by more than 40 per cent over the past 12 months. At the same time, people's incomes and livelihoods have been decimated by the crisis, meaning even fewer people can afford to buy food and other basic goods. As a result, millions of people have major gaps in their diets, as they are forced to ration consumption and subsist on cheaper and lower quality foods. People's coping capacities are being exhausted further by other factors, including the breakdown of essential services, a third wave of COVID-19 and the ongoing armed conflict that has killed or injured thousands of civilians and forced millions to flee their homes.

This year, the humanitarian community has scaled up its efforts to address the risk of famine in Yemen. Operating across all of the country's 333 districts, the UN and partners are providing lifesaving assistance to millions of people. About 10 million people are receiving food security monthly. During the first six months of the year, over 1 million farmers and herders have received urgently needed livelihoods assistance, nutrition partners reached 2.4 million people; health partners helped 3.2 million people; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) partners assisted 7.3 million people. Collectively, these and other efforts have so far prevented large-scale famine from taking hold in Yemen.



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Donor support has been instrumental to this scale-up in the humanitarian response. Following the high-level pledging event for Yemen in early March, donors have significantly strengthened their support for the [Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (YHRP), which as of 27 September had received \$2.11 billion – more than 50 per cent of its \$3.85 billion requirement. Donors also continue to work closely with agencies to promote a principled response across Yemen, which remains a top priority. Humanitarian assistance to farmers, and particularly herders, needs to not only be timely and sensitive to seasonality, but also adequate to address food-insecure households' annual food needs.

Looking ahead, continued financial support will be critical to keep famine at bay. The YHRP still has a \$1.7 billion funding gap – including more than \$680 million needed for food security and agriculture – and much of the funding that has been received could start to run out next month – meaning that many lifesaving programmes may need to be reduced or shut down. Critical agricultural support now is key to counter the impact of the crisis and a worsening situation in Yemen's vast rural areas. Without additional resources, hundreds of thousands of Yemeni families risk losing their sole source of income and will begin sliding into worsening acute hunger. Urgent support is particularly needed for other clusters that are integral to famine prevention, including nutrition, health and WASH – all of which have remained critically underfunded all year.

In addition to ensuring strong support to the humanitarian response, the international community must also address the underlying drivers of food insecurity, including by supporting the country's economy. This should include measures to bolster the exchange rate including substantial foreign currency injections, lifting restrictions on commercial imports, and boosting people's incomes. Action is also needed to promote progress towards peace and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Without these steps, people in Yemen will continue to become and stay hungry, especially the millions of women and girls, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable communities that are being hit hardest by food insecurity.