

# **Minister's Statement to the Virtual High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen**

**1 March 2021**

I want to thank OCHA, Sweden and Switzerland for arranging today's event.

For the people of Yemen, the alarm bells have never been ringing as loudly as they are today. The UN system has been warning clearly of the risk of famine - that the country is now speeding toward it. The World Food Programme tells us there are 350,000 Yemenis on the verge of famine and as many as five million people in places threatened by famine.

The roots of this crisis lie in conflict and we support strongly the process led by UN Special Envoy Martin Griffith. As a member of the UN Security Council, Ireland will press this case - which offers the only meaningful way forward. The increased risk of famine now threatens a catastrophic situation and makes these efforts all the more urgent. We call on all parties to take action to halt the disaster unfolding before our eyes.

It is essential that the world responds to provide humanitarian assistance to the people who are facing multiple threats to their wellbeing - from conflict, disease, flooding, a collapsed economy and hunger. There must be full, unfettered and safe access for humanitarian workers to all parts of Yemen.

We salute the commitment of the humanitarian workers who seek to alleviate this suffering. Their courage was tragically highlighted in late December with the killings and injuries suffered by ICRC staff at Aden airport. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We encourage all donors who have assisted Yemen in the past to continue to do so now or to recommence their aid. The spectre of famine has a particular, haunting resonance for us in Ireland. In 2021, we will play our part in supporting humanitarian assistance to Yemen. We will allocate now €5 million to the OCHA Pooled Fund. And, as we did in 2020, we will look for further opportunities to contribute to the fund. Additionally, Ireland remains fully committed to the multilateral response to the situation in Yemen, notably through CERF, where Ireland is one of the top ten donors.

Yemen is home to the world's largest humanitarian crisis. And, while the search for a political solution continues, we cannot lose time in addressing the devastating consequences of the conflict for the 24 million people in urgent need of assistance.

Thank you.