



Yemen



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	About 250,000
Percentage of total population	About 1.0%
Start of current displacement situation	2004
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	342,000 (2010)
New displacement	176,000
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	140

As of December 2010, there were about 250,000 people still forcibly displaced by internal conflicts in Yemen. Lack of humanitarian access however continued to render it difficult to verify this UN estimate and sustainability of returns. In recent years the government has faced intermittent internal armed conflict in the northern governorate of Sa'ada, a growing southern separatist movement, and the resurgence of armed groups. In Sa'ada, a group referred to as "Al-Houthis" after the family name of the leader of the rebellion, has since early 2004 engaged in an armed conflict with the Yemeni army and government-backed tribes.

The conflict spread by late 2009 to the governorates of Al Jawf, Hajjah, and Amran, and bordering areas of Saudi Arabia. There had by 2010 been six rounds of conflict since 2004, with the latest round running from August 2009 to February 2010. All parties to the conflict, including the Saudi army, reportedly perpetrated violations of humanitarian and human rights law.

In February 2010 a ceasefire put an end to hostilities, but intermittent violence continued in affected governorates. Approximately 342,000 people were registered in August 2010 as internally displaced, and more than 800,000 people had been indirectly affected by the conflict, including communities hosting IDPs. Only about 15 per cent of IDPs were gathered in camps or identified informal settlements; for many, it was their second or third displacement.

In September, clashes in the southern province of Shabwa between government forces and suspected militants led to the internal displacement of between 6,000 and 12,000 people, 80 per cent of whom had reportedly returned by the end of the year. In 2010 there were also fierce clashes in Lahj and Dahl between the Yemeni army and militants linked to the southern separatist movement. Southern human rights activists reported that at least 700 people were affected and possibly displaced due to clashes and government shelling in residential areas. In December 2010, further clashes in Lahj reportedly caused significant displacement.

As of November 2010, the UN estimated that around 225,000 people were still displaced due to the Sa'ada conflict in the four affected governorates and in the capital Sana'a. In Sa'ada alone, there were an estimated 110,000 IDPs. A sample profiling exercise undertaken in August and September suggested that only over a quarter of IDPs registered in 2010

had returned to their place of origin. The extensive damage to homes and infrastructure there, the continuing insecurity and the fear of reprisals, and the lack of livelihood opportunities and basic services all discouraged further returns. A quarter of IDPs surveyed had no intention of returning.

As of late 2010, the IDP camps only provided shelter for around one in eight IDPs, with most of the rest seeking shelter with hosts. Needs assessments carried out in accessible areas in late 2009 revealed IDPs living in open shelters, or in overcrowded housing, schools and clinics. They underlined the vulnerability of single mothers and girls to increasing domestic violence among other threats, and the lack of assistance reaching people with special needs. Exposure to violence had led to high rates of trauma and anxiety, particularly among woman and children.

The assessments also revealed that IDPs' access to clean water, sanitation, and food and non-food supplies was becoming more difficult. Access to health care remained limited. Intermittent tensions between IDPs and host communities continued through 2010. The poor access of IDPs in rural areas to pasture land and water supplies – a cause and also an outcome of these tensions – limited their livelihood opportunities.

The humanitarian response in Yemen has been impeded by restrictions on the access of agencies, limited resources and inadequate funding. The government has recognised the situation of displacement and has established mechanisms to coordinate with the humanitarian community; however its response has generally remained limited. It has enabled gradually wider access to IDPs, but humanitarian agencies have continued to face restrictions, especially in Sa'ada.

In November 2010, the UN launched its second consolidated appeal in response to the situation in northern Yemen. The cluster approach was implemented in early 2010, with UNHCR as protection cluster lead. Several international agencies and national agencies such as the Yemeni Red Crescent Society, Al Amal and the Charitable Society for Social Welfare were at the end of the year providing assistance to conflict-affected and displaced communities. In April 2010, the RSG on IDPs warned of the risk of people's displacement becoming protracted, and appealed for wider humanitarian access, greater international funding, and the development of a national framework to address the situation of displacement.