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Information bulletin

Yemen: Complex Emergency

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Host National Society: Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS)

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is asking partners to support the current Yemen Development Operational Plan - 2015 to build the capacity of the Yemen Red Crescent to provide support to the affected population.

The situation

Violence has sharply escalated in Yemen in the past week, impacting on an already vulnerable population and reaching a critical level of low resilience in a country that has been continuously battling with poverty, drought and malnutrition for the past decade. The Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS) staff and volunteers are risking their lives to reach affected people with the provision of much needed aid materials are hampered by limited access. The humanitarian needs are significantly growing in parallel with the continuation of air military operations led by the coalition, in addition to the ground armed confrontations in Aden. In the eastern part of Yemen, another front has opened up as clashes have erupted.



Young YRCS volunteers in action during the armed conflict. Source: YRCS

The Ministry of Health and Population reported that the death toll has reached 1,042 while injuries are estimated to be over 3,700. These figures include those from the ground battles in Aden, which alone have resulted in 185 deaths and 1,700 injuries according to the same source. The number of Internally Displaced People (IDP) is also on a sharp rise as the conflict spreads. There are 1,245 families (8,715 people) who have moved from different cities and have headed to Harad district, and 300 families (2,100 people) to Abs in Hajjah governorate, while 35 families (245 people) moved to Mahweet.

YRCS, supported by its movement partners, IFRC and ICRC, is present in the field and providing its services to affected people in conflict areas.

Since the beginning of the clashes in Yemen, three YRCS volunteers have lost their lives, and one has been injured in the line of duty. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has called upon all parties involved in the conflict to respect its humanitarian work and guarantee the safety of aid workers and their unimpeded, immediate access to people in need across the country. Without that respect for humanitarian workers, ambulances and health facilities, it will remain extremely difficult to continue saving lives and providing much-needed assistance to the affected population.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

As soon as the armed conflict broke out, the YRCS mobilized to assist the most vulnerable people affected by the crisis. Most of the YRCS branches are involved in providing emergency services in their relevant governorates including Sana'a, Taiz, Aldhale, Lahj, Abyan, Sada, Amran, Dhamar, Mareb, Shabwa, and Hajjah. They have a total of 183 active volunteers/members of ERTs in addition of 446 volunteers providing relief, first aid and psychosocial support.

In the southern governorates of Aden, Aldhale, and Lahj, the YRCS branches responded actively extending First Aid services to wounded people and dealing with dead body management. Unfortunately, while undertaking this much needed but hazardous activities, three YRCS volunteers were killed. As a result and due to the high risk of deployment in the field, the branches have temporarily suspended their interventions for the time being. Safe access remains a major challenge to all branches to deliver humanitarian assistance due to the complex and fluid nature of the conflict. Reporting on the delivered assistance and assessed needs is also challenging within these circumstances.

The YRCS HQ has undertaken the initiative of developing a data base for potential blood donors. An electronic form was initiated and disseminated through social websites and electronic mailing list at the national level for the whole of the country. This will facilitate the quick response for blood needs especially for rare blood types and hence contributing to saving the lives of the affected people.

The movement components are working collaboratively to coordinate the emergency response. Frequent meetings are being held and the role of Emergency Operational Room (EOR) at the YRCS HQ has been activated and is being strengthened. After extensive discussion and reviews of the current situation, the initial pressing priorities and needs have been identified and they remain focused on supporting the capacities of the YRCS to perform its first aid services through its Emergency Response Teams (ERTs).

The ICRC is working closely with the IFRC to bring together needed moral, technical and financial support for the YRCS in order to render emergency response effectively, safely and in a timely manner. The added demands on the YRCS structure necessitates the Movement components to help the YRCS HQ and branches. The ICRC continues to support the YRCS branches developing their Emergency Response contingency plans and supports their deployments in all the affected governorates: Sana'a, Aden, Shabwah, Lahj, Dhale'e, Abyan, Hajjah, Ibb, Taiz, Dhamar, and Mareb.

The support from the IFRC will remain in line with its Yemen - Development Operational Plan (DOP) for 2015 by adapting it to the emergency situation. Conforming with the latter, the British Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross have committed the total amount of CHF 180,000 for capacity enablers which include First Aid kits, emergency equipment kits, enhancing the equipment of operations' room, and the costs of fuel, logistics and coordination. IFRC will continue supporting the YRCS by strengthening its capacities to respond efficiently and effectively to the most vulnerable people affected by emergencies, mainly in the branches of Aden, Dhale and Shabwa. IFRC will hence continue supporting the same branches as initially planned for 2015 but with a heightened need for support due to the current context, as these were the most vulnerable ones, and will provide them with the required tools to be able to perform their humanitarian work under difficult and pressing conditions.

Contact information

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.