

YEMEN: FLOODS

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All governorates of Yemen, but especially the Governorates of Shabwa and Hadramout, were affected by heavy rains from 13 to 16 June. The Yemen Red Crescent Society reported that more than 250 houses were completely destroyed, while 340 were damaged and their inhabitants evacuated. So far the death toll is officially 95 persons, with dozens missing and many injured. Some of the injured were transported by air to the capital, Sana'a. According to initial information, more than 1,500 families are homeless and more than twice as many were evacuated because their houses were threatened by floodwaters.

Roads and irrigation ditches as well as electricity and telephone lines have been severely damaged. Many villages are surrounded by water. The breakdown in infrastructure has meant that all disaster assessment studies have had to be done by helicopter.

The government has now declared five governorates as disaster zones --Hadramout, El Jof, Abin, Maarib, and Shabwa -- and has established a ministerial committee composed of four Ministers to follow up and assess the situation. It launched an international appeal on 17 June.

UNDP reports that the rains have stopped and a recurrence of flash flooding is not expected for the next few days. It is organizing co-ordination meetings for embassies, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and has organized an assessment mission through DHA.

Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS) Action

Maarib governorate The YRCS sent 100 tents, 600 blankets, and 100 cooking sets to the city of Maarib and is co-ordinating with the Ministry of Defence the despatch of relief items to some districts which are surrounded by floods.

Shabwa Governorate By all accounts the Governorate of Shabwa is the most affected but also the most difficult to access. Communications are cut between districts and the district of Mifiat is completely surrounded by floods. An assessment is being done by helicopter.

Hadramout governorate According to initial information, floods cover more than 80 feddans of agricultural land in the governorate. The Belkess Dam is also reported as damaged, and the bridge linking the district of Al Shahr to the eastern parts has collapsed. The worst affected districts are Hajr, Shahr and Seoun. More than 300 families are homeless. The YRCS has prepared 150 tents, 1,000 blankets, and 150 cooking sets to be

sent by helicopter to affected regions where they are able to land. It has also received information concerning cases of diarrhoea. The WHO is providing medicines to YRCS to combat malaria and diarrhoea.

Assistance Required

YRCS is focusing its assistance on 1,423 families that have lost their homes and were left with nothing. This category of people does not include those whose homes have been destroyed partially or those who fled due to water surrounding their homes. The Society has informed the Federation Secretariat that bedding material, family-size tents (average family size in Yemen is 6.5 persons) with ground sheets, plastic sheeting, and foodstuffs for 1,423 families (approximately 9,250 people) for one month are badly needed. Following is a breakdown of the location of these families:

Shabwa	490
Maarib	473
Hadramout	230
El Jouf	160
Abin	70
Total	1,423 families

The most urgent need right now is for tents, as the YRCS stock is almost exhausted. The Society would also like to purchase 120 tons of rice, 24 tons of pulses, 15 tons of cooking oil, 9 tons of sugar, and 1.5 tons of tea for one month initially. All items can be purchased locally if funds are made available. Blankets and cooking utensils are available to the National Society. The YRCS has no branches in the regions affected by the disaster and the branch of Hadramout is quite new. Volunteers have been mobilized from other regions.

The British Red Cross has informed the Secretariat that, with funding from British ODA, it is in the process of putting together a charter flight containing up to 1,000 tents and plastic sheeting. Other donors who may be interested in providing financial or in kind assistance are urged to contact the MENA Department at the Secretariat.

Robert Watkins
Acting Director
Middle East and North Africa Department

