

YEMEN: FLOODS
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Introduction

The latest Government statistics dated 24 June indicate 167 deaths, 108 people missing and 3,770 families homeless as a result of the heavy rains and floods affecting most of central and eastern Yemen. Significant damage to roads, bridges, power, water and communications infrastructure is also recorded as well as losses to livestock and agricultural land and crops. Whilst there are predictions that health problems may arise from the use of polluted water, and standing water may increase the risk of malaria, there have been no confirmed reports of outbreaks of intestinal diseases or malaria.

Yemen Government Response

The Yemen government has provided assistance, particularly with the air transportation of relief materials to areas cut off by damage to roads and bridges. Some food assistance has been provided by local authorities to supplement the assistance provided within the community. At the national level, the government has established High and Executive Committees (chaired by the Prime Minister and Vice Prime Minister respectively) to co-ordinate relief action in addition to committees specifically set up with responsibilities for the receipt, distribution and statistics/information relating to relief materials.

International assistance has been requested for the three phases identified by the Government.

Phase 1 - Immediate relief assistance in the form of food, shelter, medicines, water supply and road and bridge repair. Expected duration: 2 months.

Phase 2 - Rehabilitation of the agricultural sector, physical infrastructure, water and power supply, communications, schools and medical centres. Needs assessed to include: 200 water pumps, 30 generators, 50 communication transmitters, electricity poles and cables and building materials. The government's existing 5 year plan will be reprioritised to take account of these needs.

Phase 3 - Reconstruction of the economies of the affected areas and establishing a government institution for disaster mitigation and management.

Each affected governorate has established local relief committees comprising the District and Police directors and three local civilians who in turn report to a governorate committee comprised of the Governor, Directors of Police and local administration representatives. These committees receive relief goods for their governorate, identify and prioritise the beneficiaries, manage the distribution, and provide distribution reports.

Red Crescent/Red Cross and other International Response

The Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS) has initiated a strong response to the disaster. It has already distributed or is in the process of distributing 1,250 tents, 1,250 kitchen sets and 7,400 blankets.

In addition to 920 tents and 58 rolls of plastic sheeting received from the British Red Cross Society (BRCS), funded by the British government, a further 115 tents from the Netherlands Red Cross, funded by the Netherlands government, are expected to arrive by 2 July. Using cash contributions of USD 10,000 from the Arab Secretariat and USD 15,000 from the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent, the Secretariat has sent 3 million water purification tablets with logistics organised by the BRCS. All of these materials will be distributed by the YRCS. The YRCS is also obtaining local quotations for basic food stuffs (sufficient for approx. 10,000 people for 1 month, at a local market value of approximately USD 170,000 excluding internal transportation). Subject to the outcome of the UNDP-chaired NGO co-ordination meeting of 26 June, funds may be sought for additional priority relief supplies.

An unspecified quantity of tents have been sent by both Jordan and Saudi Arabia and rice and medical supplies by the United Arab Emirates. The YRCS may request that some of these donations be channelled through its existing distribution and reporting system.

The UN agencies, specifically a UNDAC team (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team) working through the resident UNDP office, has been making assessments of the region. They will also act as the NGO co-ordinating body although to date there are few other NGOs noticeably present.

For further information, please contact the Acting Desk Officer for Yemen, Mr. Naoki Kokawa.

Robert Watkins
Acting Director
Middle East and North Africa Department