

Crimes against Humanity: The Tiny Bodies Ravaged by Starvation in Yemen's Forgotten War

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Saida is 18-months-old but she looks less than half that age. Her tiny body ravaged by starvation, she lies motionless and expressionless in her brother's arms.

"We have nothing to give her," said Ali. "She has diarrhoea and she's vomiting. All she does is cry. She's just limp like this all the time."

One-year-old Younis is also wasting away. His father Omar says he is scared his son will not survive. "What can we do" he asks, "who can help us? We have nothing, nothing at all" .

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Saida's brother Ali says all she does is cry. Credit: ITV New

They come from a village of Toheita, a community of fishermen and farmers in one of Yemen's poorest districts but nothing they have suffered in the past comes close to this.

The United Nations says there are 240 children in this village alone with severe malnutrition. Many have died, starved to death within sight of one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

They have no way to feed themselves. The Saudi-led coalition is enforcing a naval blockade on Yemen's Red Sea coast, searching all shipping for weapons. Delays of days, even weeks drive up prices of vital goods like rice, flour and fertiliser far beyond the means of Ali and his family.



One-year-old Younis is also wasting away. Credit: ITV News

Even in peacetime, Yemen imported 90 percent of its food. Now Hodeidah, the north's main port, has been bombed ships take far longer to unload and capacity is drastically reduced.

The UN brings in aid but in Yemen's rugged mountainous terrain it is hard to get supplies to those in isolated villages who need it the most.



The crisis in Yemen has not been helped by bridges being bombed. Credit: ITV News

Bridges have been bombed, adding to the crisis. And the blockade affects even humanitarian supplies - Hodeidah's port manager told us there are 15 ships with all the necessary UN approvals waiting at anchor to be searched.

In the town's hospital, 15 minutes drive away, children are dying of hunger, 15 in the past fortnight alone.



Children are dying of hunger in Toheita's hospital. Credit: ITV News

Doctors say they lack the supplies to help. Doctor Marwan Mohammed warns of a catastrophe unless aid arrives soon: "They're going to die. Most of them we cannot do anything for them. They are going to die. It's very sad."

Toheita is just one village in one small corner of Yemen. In hospitals across the north, in Sada'a, in Hajjah and even the capital Sanaa, we have seen wards full of malnourished children. The UN have not yet declared this a famine but if aid supplies do not dramatically increase it soon will be.



The fishermen of Toheita can't work or feed their families.

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