

The Dramatic Situation in Hodeidah, Yemen: Relentless Air Strikes, The Suffering of Millions

By [Norwegian Refugee Council](#)

Global Research, November 13, 2018

[ReliefWeb](#) 9 November 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Quote from Mohamed Abdi, NRC's country director in Yemen:

"Hodeidah is at risk of being obliterated. We warned the international community that an offensive on the city was coming, and it has. We warned that the violence would see another half a million people flee their homes, and it did.

"We are now warning that by allowing this to go on, parties to the conflict and their international backers will be responsible for the death, injury and suffering of millions of people.

"The humanitarian cost of this war is almost \$3 billion this year alone but the cost to humanity completely inestimable. Senseless attacks on civilians, evidence of a starving population and desperate pleas from humanitarian witnesses have done little more than elicit condolences from an international community that could have stepped on the brakes long ago. The lack of action from the United States and the United Kingdom, in particular, is utterly unconscionable."

Latest updates:

- Eight days into a renewed offensive on Hodeidah city, civilians are reporting relentless airstrikes, low-flying jets and Apache helicopters, mortars and missiles on the outskirts of the town and within 5km of the nation's main port.
- At least 18 civilians were killed and another 17 injured by airstrikes, artillery shelling and landmines in Hodeidah and Hajjah governorates on Wednesday this week alone, following several days of massive strikes and shelling on farms, factories, trucks, houses and markets across the governorates.
- Reports from earlier in the week that Ansarallah fighters have taken up position on the rooftop of a hospital on Hodeidah city's outskirts were followed today by reports of three airstrikes on the facility, damaging hospital buildings and prompting its evacuation, placing patients at critical risk.
- As of the last week of October, the International Organisation for Migration had recorded more than 545,000 people have fled their homes since 1 June this year, equating to almost 3,700 each day. Of this population, 83% come from Hodeidah governorate and a further 14% from Hajjah to the north of Hodeidah.
- There is now only one viable overland route from Hodeidah city to Sana'a, and a very high risk that further aerial or land attacks on roads or bridges could sever access roads between the cities entirely, cutting the last remaining supply route for food, fuel and medicine to many of the estimated 20 million Yemenis who

- depend on imports through Hodeidah to meet their basic needs.
- Five main roads in Hodeidah governorate have now been closed or cut off by fighting, and a further two highly restricted.
 - Humanitarian organisations continue to experience obstructions to the delivery of critical aid to people in dire need across Hodeidah, Hajjah and other severely-affected governorates, including cholera-prevention activities.
 - Humanitarian agencies continue to be denied visas for international staff and experience innumerable obstacles obtaining approval from authorities to travel and deliver aid within Yemen, even when providing lifesaving services, limiting our ability to reach people in desperate need.
 - The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), accounting for food, water, hygiene and cooking fuel needs was revised to YER 73,000 (USD 104) per month last week, reflecting increased costs of more than 40% since July this year. Inflation on the price of essential items, combined with the rapid depreciation of the Yemeni riyal and lack of access to income are among the key factors driving Yemen's worsening hunger crisis.
 - The International Bank of Yemen recorded an exchange rate of 680 yesterday, an appreciation of 8% since the end of October, but still a dramatic devaluation from the rate of 215 at which the riyal traded before the crisis.

Facts:

- An estimated 3.3 million people lived in Hodeidah governorate before June 2018, 600,000 in Hodeidah city. Some 29.3 million people live in Yemen.
- Yemen depends on imports for around 90 per cent of its food needs. Of this, between 70 and 80 per cent of all imports have historically come through Hodeidah Port. Further disruption to imports or overland supply routes risks severing the lifeline for up to 22 million Yemenis.
- 12 million Yemenis are now at imminent risk of famine and more than 16 million without access to safe water, exposing them to increased risk of infectious diseases, such as cholera.
- NRC continues to operate across nine governorates in Yemen, delivering assistance with food, safe water, shelter, education and legal aid to people displaced by violence.

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Featured image: Hassan (5) holding his younger sister Ratif (3 months). (Source: SmugMug)

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