



YEMEN CONFERENCE 2020

HIGH-LEVEL PLEDGING EVENT FOR THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN YEMEN

Press Release

[Under embargo until 00:01 ET / 06:00 CET on 2 June 2020](#)

International donors meet as humanitarian agencies sound the alarm on Yemen and call for urgent funding

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(Riyadh/New York, 2 June 2020) – International donors are coming together today, convened by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Nations, to raise needed funds for the life-saving humanitarian response in Yemen.

More than 130 governments and other donors, international humanitarian organizations and aid officials will meet virtually to raise awareness about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen – where COVID-19 is just the latest challenge - and announce pledges of financial support to the ongoing aid operation. The event comes at a time when the situation for most Yemenis is more dire than at any point in recent history. Several humanitarian programmes are hanging by a thread because of funding shortages.

Yemen is the world's largest humanitarian crisis with 24 million people in need of aid and protection, and the situation is getting worse by the hour. Yemen is at a precipice. All indications point to COVID-19 spreading fast and wide across the country, overwhelming the health system. The United Nations and NGOs need US\$2.4 billion to respond through the end of the year, including \$180 million for COVID-19 response. But funding is falling dramatically short. Of 41 major UN programmes in Yemen, more than 30 will close in the next few weeks if additional funds do not materialize, leaving millions without the aid they need to survive.

Today's High-Level Pledging Event does not specify a funding target, but a similar pledging conference last year raised \$2.6 billion. Even more important than the pledges is the requirement for speedy payment to avert looming disaster.

What's at stake?

Aid agencies in Yemen are delivering the world's largest relief operation, reaching more than 10 million people monthly. The COVID-19 response has increased the urgency, scale and financial requirements of the operation.

Without additional funding, the consequences will be as devastating as they are predictable:

- Only half of Yemen's health facilities are fully functioning. Those still operational are overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases and lack masks, gloves and oxygen to treat COVID-19 patients. Many health and frontline humanitarian workers have no protective gear, and most are receiving no salaries.
- Further cuts in food assistance will raise the spectre of a famine as millions of families across Yemen depend on food aid to survive.
- Supplemental nutrition for 1.7 million children and expecting mothers will downsize and nearly a quarter of a million children will see the support reduce or stop.

For further information, please contact:

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- Mobile teams and treatment centres for severely acutely malnourished children will be forced to reduce or stop services. Tens of thousands of children will be at imminent risk of death.
- Water and sanitation services in Yemen's major cities may grind to a halt placing millions of people at risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera.
- Family tracing and reunification for children, psychological first aid, and assistance to survivors of gender-based violence could stop.
- Patients in need of surgery or with chronic diseases will in many places be left without help.
- Critical help to hundreds of thousands of displaced people, refugees and migrants, will down-grade or disappear.

Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said:

“The situation in Yemen is desperate but we still have the capacity to reach people. Even after having to withdraw non-essential staff, we have plenty of colleagues on the ground. There are thousands of Yemeni aid workers still working with the UN, Red Cross and NGOs. But most of the agencies are a few weeks from being broke. We are asking donors not just to promise money today but to pay pledges promptly.”

In 2019, international donors provided a total of \$4 billion to support relief work in Yemen. In 2018, donors provided \$5.2 billion, thanks to generous donors such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and others.

On the eve of today's pledging event, the UN has recorded \$698 million available for the entire humanitarian response operation. The \$2.4 billion asked for by the UN for the remainder of the year is an additional requirement.

Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Advisor – Royal Court and Supervisor General of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) said:

“Saudi Arabia has continued to be the top donor to the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan and urges other donor countries to donate generously. We are deeply concerned by the aggression and violations against aid delivery, including diversion, stealing and redirection. KSrelief will continue to support all regions of Yemen through the UN organizations and international and regional NGOs in the hope that this support will help to minimize the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Let us together make a better future for those who need us.”

Note to Editors

1. Questions from media to H.E. Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Supervisor General, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, can be submitted up till two hours before the closing of the event on WhatsApp and by email. Please send your name, outlet and brief question to Jens Laerke, laerke@un.org, WhatsApp +41 79 472 9750 (English) and Hayat Abu-Saleh, abusaleh@un.org, WhatsApp +1 917 224 9751 (Arabic)
2. A Note to Correspondents with the final pledging result will be issued immediately after the closing of the event.
3. The entire event is webcast from 9:00 a.m. ET / 3:00 p.m. CET on <https://ksrelief.org/live> and <http://webtv.un.org/>. The media Q&A session is scheduled at 1:10 p.m. – 1:40 p.m. ET / 7:10 p.m. – 7:40 p.m. CET.

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