

Yemen

Update 3 | 23 November 2017

Situation Overview

Following the announcement on 22 November by the Saudi-led coalition (SLC) that Sana'a airport and Al Hudaydah seaport will be reopened for humanitarian and relief efforts, the United Nations has submitted a deconfliction notification to SLC to resume the transport of aid personnel and humanitarian cargo to northern parts of Yemen and is awaiting confirmation.

It is essential the seaports of Al Hudaydah and Saleef be fully re-opened as they are of paramount importance to the continuation of the humanitarian operation in Yemen and to ensuring the continued flow of large volumes of commercial imports required to meet the needs of the country.

Almost three weeks after the blockade was imposed, essential commodities like food, fuel, safe water and medical supplies have started running low in the country or have seen their prices skyrocket. There continues to be a grave risk of further death, disease and starvation. On 20 November, the [Famine Early Warning Systems Network](#) (FewsNet) warned that should the blockade continue, many areas of Yemen are likely to experience famine within three to four months.



Impact on fuel availability

- Based on preliminary information from the Yemen Petroleum Company, WFP estimates that supplies of petrol and diesel could run out in the coming week. Exact predictions on when different areas will run out of fuel are difficult as they depend on how traders will ration supply and how stockpiles built by non-commercial actors could re-enter the market.
- The largest fuel importing companies in Yemen have indicated that they will no longer be able to supply the consumer market at the end of this week. Small businesses which depend on this market will have to reduce their activities or close. Public transport in Sana'a is reported to have significantly reduced, affecting people's livelihoods and access to services.
- The Urban Water Unit of the Ministry of Water and Environment in Sana'a estimates that seven cities (Sana'a, Hudaydah, Hajjah, Taizz, Sa'ada, Al Bayda and Amran) have depleted their fuel stocks and reduced the population's access to safe water. Two cities, Ibb and Dhamar, expect fuel stocks to run out in two to four weeks. The estimated fuel consumption for these cities is 2.8 million litres. UNICEF and other [WASH Cluster](#) partners have agreed to support the water networks in these cities, but this support can only be provided if fuel remains available in the market at a reasonable price.
- Despite humanitarian support, fuel shortages are threatening the pumping and delivery of water as well as the treatment and disposal of waste, posing serious health risks. The main concerns are currently related to the operation of waste water treatment plants in Amanat Al Asimah and Hudaydah city, and the solid waste collection and disposal in the main cities in the country. The waste water treatment plant in Amanat Al Asimah is currently supported by UNICEF but fuel is available until mid-December only. The treatment plant in Hudaydah is partially functional with electricity support provided by UNICEF.
- A Logistics Cluster assessment of 42 INGOs, NNGOs and UN agencies shows that over one million litres of fuel is needed per month to ensure uninterrupted humanitarian operations. The Cluster is working with WFP on the possibility of importing 1.5 million litres of diesel over the next weeks.



Impact on water and sanitation

- According to the WASH Cluster, lack of fuel could potentially impact 16.7 million people who depend on public water networks and commercial water.

- Approximately four million people depend on private water trucking as their main water source while some 1.7 million people in Amanat Al Asimah and Taizz city depend on bottled water to meet their daily water needs. Shortages of fuel and rising fuel prices have translated to an increased cost of commercial water ranging between 17 to 60 per cent across northern governorates and up to 90 per cent in Amanat Al Asimah, as reported by the Cash and Market Working Group.
- As prices spike, households are under pressure to spend cash grants provided for food to buy water, further increasing the risk of widespread food insecurity and ultimately famine. If households are unable to purchase water, they are likely resort to accessing unsafe water sources such as unprotected wells, rainwater tanks or rivers, which could increase the spread of water-borne diseases such as cholera.



Impact on health/nutrition

- A chartered UNICEF plane carrying vaccines is expected to fly to Sana'a airport on 25 November after waiting in Nairobi for days. UNICEF cannot divert the cargo to Aden as Sana'a is the main cold chain storage facility with capacity to store vaccines for the entire country. Aden airport does not have a cold chain facility and the overland transport of these highly perishable items from Aden to Sana'a would require 12 hours driving across more than 30 check points crossing front lines. Failure to deliver these vaccines, would affect almost 600,000 children aged less than 1 year.
- The delay in delivering diphtheria medical supplies has serious consequences. The disease is spreading fast in Yemen with 156 clinically diagnosed cases and 14 deaths – mostly children – in the last few weeks. Eighty-three per cent of the cases are reported from six districts in Ibb Governorate. On 21 November, six new cases were reported in Hudaydah with one death.
- Even with a partial lifting of the blockade on Yemen, an additional 3.2 million people will be pushed into hunger, as jointly warned by WFP, WHO and UNICEF. If left untreated, 150,000 malnourished children could die of malnutrition in the coming months.



Impact on shipping/flights

- The Logistics Cluster reports that approximately 145 MT of cholera response supplies for WHO, WFP and IMC are on hold at Djibouti port. Some 29 vessels with approximately 500,000 MT of commercially imported food and fuel supplies have failed to access Yemen's ports due to the blockade.
- A WFP vessel carrying 25,000 MT of bulk wheat, sufficient for 1.8 million beneficiaries for one month, has been waiting to access Saleef port since 11 November. A second vessel, carrying 1,313 MT/3,544 cbm of UNICEF/WHO health, WASH and nutrition supplies, is awaiting confirmation to sail to Al Hudaydah port.
- UNHAS has cancelled 32 flights since 6 November, stranding 220 UN/INGO staff from nearly 50 agencies in Djibouti and Amman while 310 staff are stranded in Sana'a and other duty stations waiting to rotate out of the country by air from Sana'a airport. On 22 November, an ICRC flight safely landed and departed from Sana'a on a medevac mission.
- Yemenia airlines, MSF, ICRC and UNHAS flights are landing at Aden airport, while commercial vessels have started accessing Aden port. WFP reports that the diversion of commercial vessels to Aden will soon result in congestion of the port facilities and additional humanitarian food shipments will not be able to enter Aden before mid-January 2018.



Impact on humanitarian procurements

- Humanitarian partners who were procuring internationally will be forced to make future procurements through the local market, if the blockade persists. This will have significant implications on programmes and budgets due to higher prices in local markets. Local Yemeni banks are also limiting the withdrawals of US dollars. Additionally, banks are providing notes printed in 2003 which are accepted in fewer exchange bureaus at a significantly reduced exchange rate.

For further information, please contact:

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