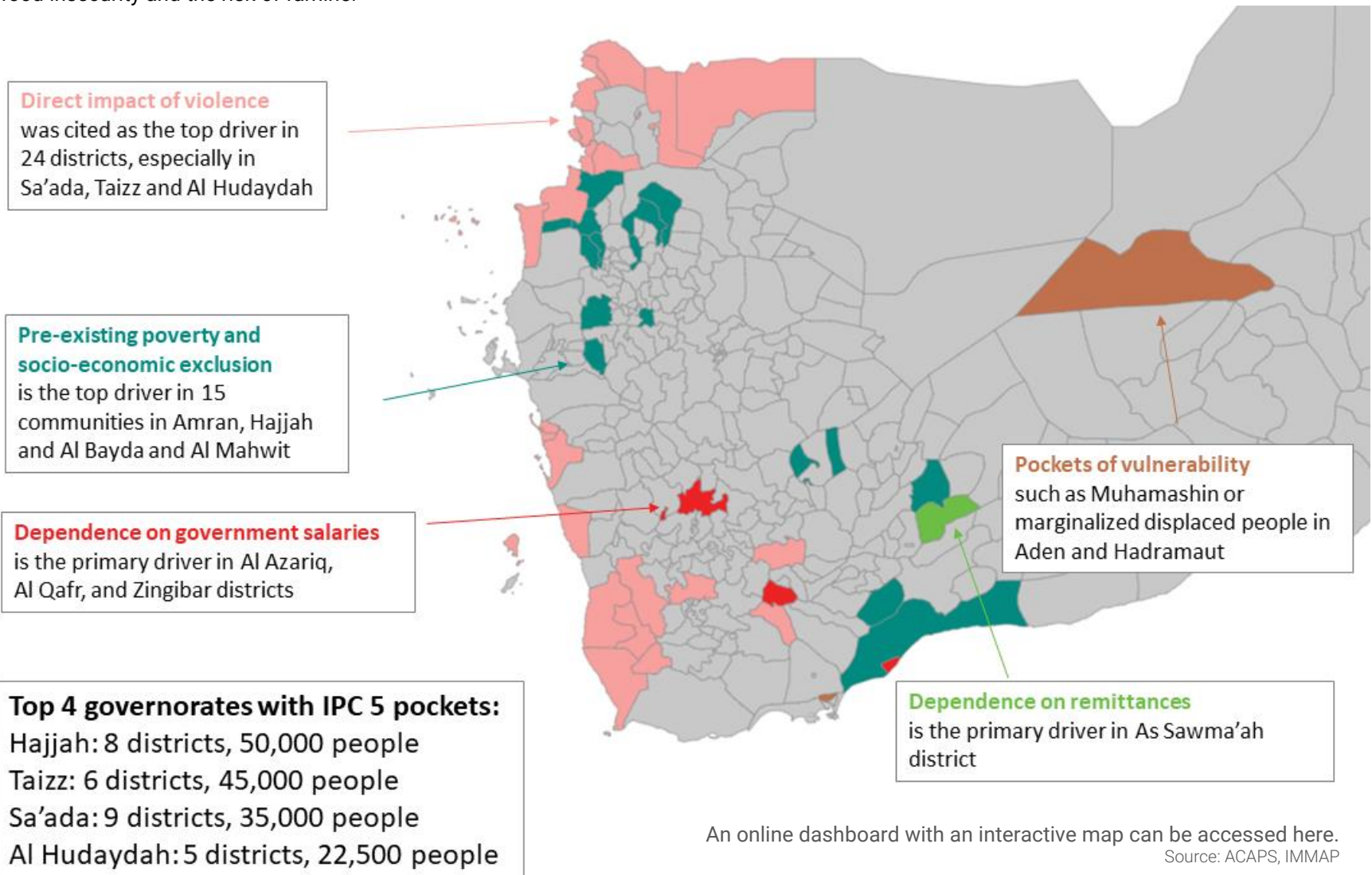


YEMEN: Drivers of food insecurity

45 districts with pockets of population facing IPC 5 (Catastrophe)

This analysis examines the socio-economic conditions underlying Catastrophic levels of food insecurity in 45 districts of Yemen to identify key drivers which made these communities so vulnerable to food insecurity and the risk of famine.

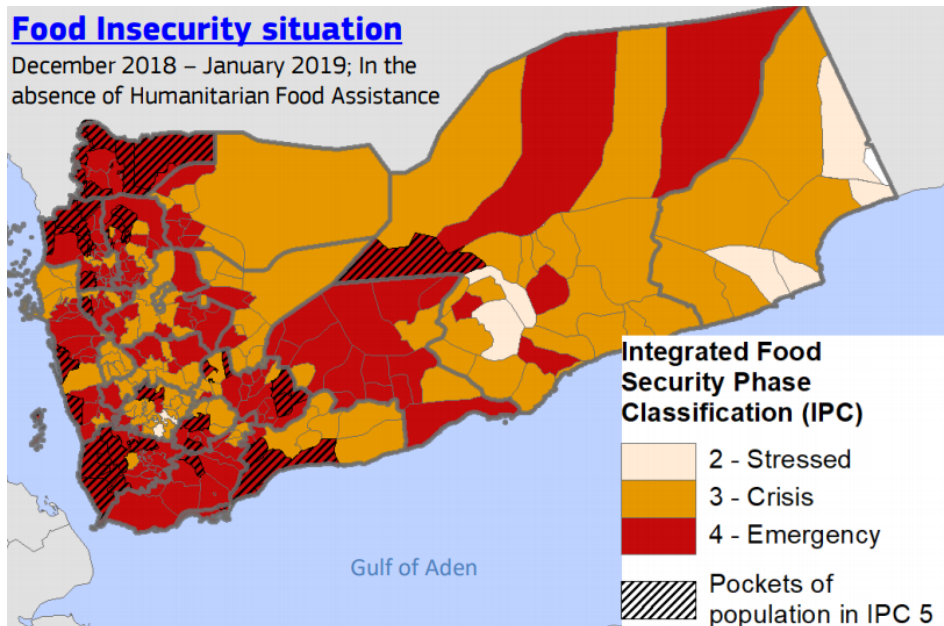
Twenty million Yemenis are food insecure and 238,000 people in 45 of Yemen's 333 districts were at risk of experiencing Catastrophe (IPC 5) levels of food insecurity in early 2019 in the absence of humanitarian aid.



Yemen is currently experiencing a very severe human-made food crisis. In the beginning of 2019, 190 out of 333 districts would be classified as IPC Phase 4 (Severe) and **238,000 people in 45 of those districts were at risk of experiencing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) levels of food insecurity in the absence of humanitarian aid** (IPC 20/12/2018). People categorised in IPC 5 face an extreme lack of food and other basic needs leading to starvation, death, and destitution (IPC Manual). IPC analysis provides evidence that those communities would experience such conditions in the absence of humanitarian food assistance. However, **63,500 people countrywide were already facing Catastrophe food insecurity outcomes in the presence of humanitarian food assistance at the beginning of 2019** (IPC 20/12/2018).

Food insecurity has been an issue in Yemen long before the recent conflict. This analysis examines the socio-economic conditions in IPC 5 districts to try to answer the question – **what conditions and factors made these 45 communities so vulnerable to food insecurity?** Why did the broader conflict, fiscal and economic challenges that have affected all Yemenis push pockets of people into IPC 5 levels of food insecurity in these areas, but not in others?

This analysis was developed in February 2019 through expert opinion - detailed discussions with Yemeni experts – cross-checked against published district and governorate level data and secondary data review.



Source: ECHO 07/03/2019, IPC 20/12/2018

190 districts would be classified as IPC Phase 4 (Severe) in the absence of humanitarian food assistance. The UN has identified 104 of these communities, containing almost one-third of the country's population, with a convergence of complex, multi-sectoral needs. Without urgent action, these communities could fall into IPC 5. **By focusing on the 45 current IPC 5 pockets, we hope to provide a snapshot that helps to inform the response needed to prevent further deterioration of food security throughout Yemen, not to suggest the response should focus on only on these districts.**

What are the drivers of food insecurity in Yemen?

There is a lot of evidence documenting the drivers of food insecurity in Yemen. Conflict has devalued Yemen's currency, exacerbated the fragmentation of the country - increasing the cost and risk of importing and moving key commodities - and damaged productive infrastructure, assets, roads, and port facilities. This has driven up the price of essential items in Yemen's import dependent economy. Both commercial and humanitarian imports were disrupted by blockades of sea and air ports and administrative restrictions imposed by all sides to the conflict.

At the same time, business closures, reduced agricultural production, the drop in government salary payments and rising restrictions on access to the Saudi labour market have reduced the money coming in to many Yemeni families. Food is available in local markets, but fewer people can afford to buy it. Caught between the dual challenges of rising prices and dropping income, 20 million Yemenis have fallen into food insecurity.

Water, sanitation, and health infrastructure has collapsed in many parts of the country because of damage or lack of maintenance. Conflict frontlines, checkpoints and rising fuel prices make it more dangerous and more expensive to travel to reach services and access clean water. Local communities are compensating by digging new wells and pumping water, but rising fuel prices make this form of water extraction very expensive, further increasing the gap between incomes and the cost of living. With over 50% of health facilities damaged or non-functional, health and nutrition services are unable to respond to growing caseloads of malnutrition, cholera, and other diseases. The lack of access to safe water, sanitation, and healthcare increases people's risk of disease which can interact with malnutrition to lead to mortality.

Large scale displacement due to conflict has also put pressure on overstretched local services and poor host communities.

Key findings

The most common explanation for acute food insecurity in Yemen is the impact of the conflict. In a broad sense this is accurate as most of the economic and social drivers impacting IPC 5 communities were aggravated by the current conflict (beginning in 2015) as well as previous conflicts in the north of Yemen since 2004.

However, more granular and inter-sectoral analysis focusing specifically at the district and community level reveals that a number of different drivers are at play, based on the particular social, economic and contextual history of the community. As noted in the 2019 HNO, gaining a more granular understanding of needs and dynamics at the district and community level will help develop a more targeted and effective response.

Taking into consideration a wide range of drivers affecting the entire country, ACAPS identified five main drivers which likely made those specific 45 districts with pockets of IPC 5 populations particularly vulnerable to food insecurity:

Direct impact of violence on local businesses, trade routes and markets was identified as the top driver of acute food insecurity in 24 of the 45 IPC 5 districts, mainly around the agricultural, export and manufacturing heartlands of Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah and Taizz. Conflict frontlines, damage to productive assets, and challenges accessing key markets and trade routes have increased the cost and risk of doing business and reduced access to livelihoods and lifesaving services. Businesses have closed as key inputs like fuel, agricultural supplies, and water have become scarcer and more expensive due to the collapse of Yemen's currency. These factors have reduced income for local families and increased the cost of food and other essential goods, above the average of non-conflict affected areas in the country.

Direct impact of violence had a large impact on water and health infrastructure limiting access to basic services and increasing the risk of cholera and malnutrition, which can interact to increase the risk of mortality.

Pre-existing poverty and historic lack of development, rather than direct impact of violence, was the most significant driver of acute food insecurity for the 15 central districts around Amran, Hajjah, and Al Bayda. Poverty in Yemen is historically higher in rural communities. These communities were left out of Yemen's government-directed and oil-funded development, leaving them without the same level of networks, social capital and local industry as other parts of the country – resources that could have provided some cushioning against economic shocks resulting from the conflict.

The collapse of salary payments from the Government appears to have hit the districts of Al Qafr (Ibb), Zingibar (Abyan) and Al Azareq (Al Dhale'e) particularly hard. While the cessation of public sector wages in 2016 affected all areas of Yemen, districts in the

south were particularly reliant on salary payments from the military and security forces. Yemeni commentators see a socio-economic explanation behind this. Decades of socialist political and economic rule in the South left many of these communities without a strong business and entrepreneurial culture (excluding Hadramis who have trade networks spanning India and South East Asia dating back centuries). This means that these communities have fewer alternative industries or businesses to fall back on to offset the drop in public sector wages. Houthi controlled Al Qafr may be particularly vulnerable as, due to its historic association with the government armed forces, it is unlikely to be integrated into Houthi patronage networks.

Reduction of remittances from Saudi Arabia was the primary driver in As Sawma'ah (Al Bayda). Key informants in Yemen believe that this rural and tribal district was heavily reliant on remittances from Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia, given its long history of association with Saudi Arabia and relatively high concentration of Sunni/Salafi Yemenis. The reduction of remittances from Saudi Arabia, following the labour and migration law reforms executed in the country in 2013, rendered As Sawma'ah vulnerable to acute food insecurity. Approximately 600,000 Yemenis were expelled from Saudi Arabia between 2013 and 2014, limiting cash flows into Yemen and increasing unemployment. In 2017, additional taxes on all foreign workers and their dependents were imposed in Saudi Arabia and some jobs were reserved for Saudi citizens only, which is likely to further affect Yemeni workers and remittances.

Pockets of vulnerability in Aden, Hadramaut were found to be major factors contributing to acute food insecurity. Main vulnerable groups include Muhamashin, refugees, migrants, and IDPs who are excluded from the economic opportunities and social and tribal networks that provide support to the remainder of the population. Communities presenting multiple vulnerabilities are likely to be affected the most. Muhamashin people have been suffering from administrative, social, and economic discrimination for years. They are likely to be overlooked by local response actors and struggle more in the event of displacement.

Outlook

If current trends and the level of humanitarian aid prevail, the humanitarian needs in 45 districts experiencing IPC 5 are likely to remain high, particularly in Sa'ada and Hajjah, but fall short of famine conditions. However, if the Stockholm agreement fails and conflict escalates, leading to further disruption of imports, trade, and humanitarian response, there is a risk that large areas of the country could fall into famine.

Humanitarian needs will likely be further affected by the lean season, which starts in April. The ongoing rainy season lasting through June is likely to exacerbate the cholera situation which can interact with malnutrition to increase morbidity and mortality.

Drivers and underlying vulnerabilities contributing to food insecurity

Acute food insecurity is driven by a wide range of factors and underlying vulnerabilities, ranging from wider economic and conflict-related issues affecting the whole country, to localised problems specific to certain areas or communities.

All of the districts discussed in this report are affected by countrywide macroeconomic factors such as increased unemployment, decreased GDP, currency devaluation, price deflation, the financial and banking crisis, and disruption of imports due to blockades and closures of main ports, all of which contribute to the current economic depression experienced across Yemen. Those economic factors, together with the impact of violence, led to the collapse of basic services. Markets, water, health, and educational facilities have been heavily affected across the country.

Drivers and vulnerabilities discussed below are more localised. They focus on the specific consequences that violence and dependence on remittances and government salaries had on the affected communities, and how pre-existing poverty and other key vulnerabilities aggravated the situation, pushing them into the most severe food insecurity.

Each district is affected by complex and multiple sets of drivers, often interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Deterioration or intensification of those drivers threatens a downward cascading effect which could trigger a complete collapse of the economic and food systems (IPC Famine Review Committee). Therefore, it is important to not consider the drivers discussed below in isolation and note that identification of main drivers per district, while useful to explain the complicated situation, requires a level of simplification that was introduced to prioritise the importance of specific drivers in specific areas.

1. Direct impact of violence

While the impact of conflict on Yemen's economy and basic services is in a broad sense a contributor to food insecurity across the country, **active violence is the main driver of food insecurity in 24 out of 45 IPC 5 districts, primarily in heavily affected Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah, and Taizz governorates**. In 2019, violence had an increasing impact on food insecurity in Hajjah governorate as well.

Active fighting contributed to the deterioration of food security through the destruction of productive assets, supply chain and trade route disruption, increasing prices, and limiting access to markets – in addition to destruction of services and infrastructure.

Destruction of productive assets

In Al Hudaydah governorate, people depended on agriculture, fisheries, and export/import services for livelihoods before the crisis. The outbreak of violent clashes between Government and Houthi forces disrupted these livelihood generating activities by damaging local industries, markets, and transport infrastructure. Targeting farms and killing livestock in Al Hudaydah had a detrimental effect not only on livelihood generation, but also on food production for local consumption (Almotamar news 3/01/2016). Sa'ada and Al Hudaydah governorates recorded 377 and 325 attacks respectively against farms, businesses, infrastructure (food, fuel, water and transport), and markets from 2017 to February 2019, 75% of the total recorded incidents nationwide (Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP)). Baqim and Razih in Sa'ada and At Tuhayta in Al Hudaydah are the top three districts affected by damage to food and water infrastructure (CIMP). All have pockets of IPC 5 populations.

Increased business costs and disrupted trade routes

Violence has disrupted the supply chain by increasing the risks that businesses face in importing and distributing food. The closure of infrastructure that people rely on for economic activities (ports, airports, roads), frequent checkpoints, attacks on roads, as well as increasing prices of fuel and additional taxes increased the cost and risk of doing business to the point that many economic activities have become unprofitable. Both Sa'ada and Al Hudaydah reported the highest number of armed attacks damaging fuel and transport infrastructure since 2017 (CIMP). High fuel costs are further increased by longer distances the food has to be transported in order to avoid blockages and areas of conflict. Road travel from Hudaydah to Sana'a reportedly takes much longer compared to pre-crisis times because of violence and road blockages.

Disrupted trade routes and blockades heavily affected export capacities, which many Yemenis relied on for livelihoods. Populations heavily reliant on agriculture are particularly vulnerable to rising prices of water and agricultural inputs and the reduced ability to market their products abroad. Experts in Yemen attribute the sharp rise in poverty rates in Sa'ada governorate to the conflict-related decline of its agricultural sector. Despite limited government investment, Sa'ada residents made money in the 1990s and early 2000s selling oranges, pomegranates and raisins to the local and Saudi market. The loss of access to local and international markets, compounded by damage to productive assets and rising input prices has dramatically increased poverty (84.5% poverty rate reported in Sa'ada in 2014, up from 16.55% in 2005/2006 (World Bank 01/06/2017, 01/11/2007)).

Increased prices

Destruction of productive assets, increased business costs, and high transportation prices have all contributed to a sharp rise in food prices. Al Hudaydah, Sa'ada and Taizz are consistently reported among the governorates with the lowest exchange rates of YER (which makes imports of food and essential items more expensive) and the highest cost of the minimum food basket. Al Hudaydah also had significant rates of pre-crisis poverty (58.1% in 2014), meaning its residents had fewer resources to help absorb this shock (World Bank 01/06/2017).

Food insecurity increases in line with prices of fuel and water. High prices of those commodities drive loss of access to agricultural livelihoods, limiting agricultural production for own consumption or sale. Experts suggest that many farmers across Yemen decided to switch to more profitable qat production, rather than food agriculture, in order to gain more money and increase their purchasing power. Qat production requires a lot of water and results in less land and water available for food production.

Destruction and neglect of key water, sanitation and health infrastructure

IPC 5 districts in Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah and Taizz recorded over 4,800 incidences of damage to civilian infrastructure since November 2017, close to eight times as much as the 10 remaining IPC 5 governorates combined (645). Damage to civilian structures disrupts provision of, and access of the affected population to, safe water, electricity, and health services, contributing to a higher famine risk. In As Safra (Sa'ada), 12,000 people were cut off from their usual water source and had to get water from shallow wells following the destruction of the Nushur water facility by airstrikes in July 2018. Currently 60% of people in the local community in As Safra report a lack of access to drinking water (2018 MCLA Technical Working Group). This has led to an increase in dehydration and cholera caseloads reported in the district in 2018 (USAID, 12/2018). Lack of access to safe drinking water and limited health services increase the risk of disease, particularly cholera and measles which can interact with malnutrition to lead to mortality.

Data also suggests that prolonged conflict in Yemen amplifies poverty. Sa'ada governorate, which faced six rounds of conflict between 2004 to 2010, went from being the governorate with the lowest percentage of poor in 2005/06 to having the highest poverty rate in 2014 (World Bank, 2007, 2017). 84.5% of people in Sa'ada lived below the poverty line in 2014 and currently the governorate hosts 33,500 people in IPC 5, behind only Hajjah (50,000) and Taizz (44,500). The governorate also presents the highest prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) across the country (Nutrition Cluster 2018).

The case of Sa'ada suggests that, unless the current conflict in Yemen is addressed, conflict affected districts in Al Hudaydah and Taizz are likely to slip further into poverty.

2. Pre-existing poverty

While the escalation of fighting since 2014 is widely discussed as a driver of acute food insecurity and economic crisis, pre-crisis poverty and social and economic exclusion is likely a more significant factor in 15 of the 45 IPC 5 districts. Areas where food insecurity is highly attributable to pre-crisis poverty and exclusion include governorates such as Amran, Hajjah, Al Mahwit, Abyan, and some districts in Al Bayda.

Yemen has been characterised by high poverty rates for decades. Data from 2005 suggests that Amran, Hajjah and Al Bayda all had more than half of their citizens living in poverty. Poverty has been highly concentrated in rural areas. Rural populations in Midi and Haradh districts (Hajjah), and Al Ashah, Al Qafalah, Suwayr and Maswar districts in Amran were already particularly vulnerable in 2005, with 71% of rural people in Amran living below the poverty rate (World Bank 01/11/2007, World Bank 01/06/2017).

The local population in Amran and Hajjah historically depended on limited agricultural revenue and livestock herding. Yemeni experts see a socio-political link with poverty in many districts. Amran, the home-town of former President Saleh and many senior military officials, saw limited government investment or development funding in the Yemen Republic years. Explanations vary from the fact that key political power brokers saw little need to appease a population that strongly supported them, to theories that a less educated and less wealthy population was easier to control.

Poverty and social exclusion contribute to food insecurity in numerous ways. Poor districts have less reserves to fall back on in response to rising prices and reduced income. Poverty contributes to child and adolescent malnutrition through inadequate availability and low quality of food, poor feeding practices and limited access to water and sanitation services. This is aggravated by inadequate health care as poor families are less likely to seek treatment due to the high cost of medical services. Protection experts report widespread recruitment of men from Amran to armed forces, including Houthi forces, since the beginning of the conflict due to financial incentives. This is likely to result in a high number of widows and female-headed households, which can be particularly vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity.

It's important to note that the decline in poverty observed in Yemen in the early 2000s was largely a result of oil-driven economic growth and as such did not benefit the poor, particularly the rural poor. Poverty rates in 2016 ranged from 62% and 78% across the country, with a significant increase in the depth as well as severity of poverty. This indicates that the populations already vulnerable before the crisis are currently most likely facing extreme poverty and famine-like conditions and require immediate humanitarian assistance. Long-lasting support and development activities are needed to support those populations to regain economic stability (World Bank 01/06/2017).

3. Dependence on government salaries

According to local experts, the purchasing power of the population in **three IPC 5 districts may have been particularly reliant on government salaries**: Al Qafr (Ibb), Al Azariq (Al Dhale'e) and Zingibar (Abyan). In December 2016, regular government salaries represented the main sources of income for 23.9% of surveyed households in Ibb, 39.7% in Abyan, and the 29.7% in Al Dhale'e. These proportions are high compared to other governorates in Yemen (national average of 22.3%) (EFSNA June 2017).

Due to historically high levels of unemployment and cultural norms, one breadwinner's salary in Yemen is likely to be a source of income for an extended family. There are on average 6-7 people per family in Yemen, but the loss of a single salary might impact not only the closest family but also further relatives and community members. (National Health and Demographic Survey 2013).

Around 3.3 million children under 18, including 1.2 million children under five years of age, were affected by the non-payment of state salaries. Those children were particularly exposed to the risk of malnutrition, particularly as one-third of households that relied on government salaries as a main source of income were already food insecure in 2014 (MOPIC 10/2016).

Why can't the government pay salaries in Yemen?

Following the escalation of armed violence in 2014/2015, the fragmentation of the country, and the blockade of Yemen's key ports and airports, the already weak formal banking system in Yemen started to collapse. The quick depletion of the Central Bank foreign exchange reserves resulted in a liquidity crisis and then a wage crisis. Cash shortages in August 2016 resulted in the Central Bank of Yemen ceasing to pay public sector wages. More than one-third of working Yemenis and their families lost their primary source of income (Reuters 25/01/2017; UNDP 12/2016). The liquidity and wage crisis in Yemen also affected the functioning and delivery of basic services, such as healthcare and education. Front line workers stopped receiving salaries and managers did not have budgets to pay for maintenance and fuel.

Al Qafr (Ibb), Al Azariq (Al Dhale'e) and Zingibar (Abyan) districts are historically known as major recruiting grounds for the Yemeni military and security services, with very limited sources of alternative livelihoods (besides low value agriculture and livestock herding). These three districts recorded no civilian casualties and no damage to civilian infrastructure in the previous 12 months (CIMP). However, the nation-wide collapse of salary payments has disproportionately affected these districts due to their heavy reliance on this source and limited alternative options - agriculture and herding have

also been hard-hit by rising fuel and water prices. Yemeni commentators see a socio-economic explanation behind this. Decades of socialist political and economic rule in the South left many of these communities without a strong business and entrepreneurial culture (excluding Hadramis who have trade networks spanning India and South East Asia dating back centuries). This means that these communities have fewer alternative industries or businesses to fall back on to offset the drop in public sector wages.

The situation is likely to be even worse in Al Qafr (Ibb), which is under Houthi control. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the district's historic association with the government security establishment means that few local residents are likely to be integrated into Houthi patronage networks.

4. Dependence on remittances from Saudi Arabia

According to local experts, a heavy reliance on remittances is likely the main contributing factor behind pockets of IPC 5 in As Sawma'ah (Al Bayda).

Yemen's long history of labour migration

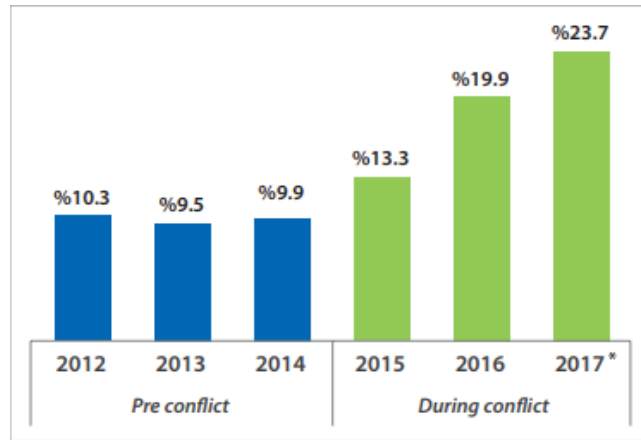
Remittances from GCC countries represented 90% of all remittances to Yemen in 2016, 61% of which came from Saudi Arabia. Remittances by Yemeni expats were estimated at \$3.4 billion in 2017 (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation 02/2018).

As Sawma'ah is a rural, tribal district in the east of Al Bayda. Local sources report that As Sawma'ah shares close historic and economic ties with Saudi Arabia. As Sawma'ah residents are predominantly Bedouin, Sunni and Salafi, similar to the majority culture in Saudi Arabia. Al Bayda governorate overall is highly reliant on remittances, accounting for 28.1% of all sources of income in 2016 (EFSNA, June 2017). Local sources report that As Sawma'ah district was particularly reliant on remittances, with large numbers of local men working in the Saudi labour market. Many men have reportedly returned to As Sawma'ah in recent years due to the increasingly restrictive work environment in Saudi Arabia. They return to limited job opportunities. The only work available in As Sawma'ah is day labour in the construction or agriculture sectors. Both these industries have been heavily impacted by the post-2015 economic downturn in Yemen and rising fuel and water prices.

Remittances remain an important source of income for many Yemenis, accounting for 23.7% of GDP in 2017. However, remittances fell sharply between 2017 and 2018 as

Saudi Arabia **expelled several hundred thousand illegal workers, including Yemenis, introduced additional taxes on all foreign workers and their dependents and announced the 'Saudization' of 60,000 jobs** held previously by expatriates (World Bank

14/03/2019, The Independent 11/03/2018, FEWS NET 23/03/2019).



Yemeni expatriates remittances to GDP % (countrywide)

* Estimates of MoPIC and WB, 2017

Source: MOPIC 02/2018, CBY, 2016

This follows similar crackdowns on Yemen workers in 2013 when Saudi Arabia began to reform its migration and labour laws. IOM reports that **600,000 Yemenis were expelled from the Kingdom between 2013 and 2014.**

Deportations, delays in issuing work permits, new taxes, currency shortages, bank office closures, restrictions and high costs of money transfers imposed on Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia all reduced the money available to remittance-dependent households in Yemen (World Bank 14/03/2019, FEWS NET 09/2016).

National data suggests that the drop in remittances may particularly affect female headed households. According to the 2014 Yemen Household Budget Survey, remittances received from outside Yemen by female headed households represented 46% of total household expenditure, compared to only 28% of total expenditure of male headed households. The vast majority of remittances received by female-headed households (93%) was coming from a spouse or children. Another 24% of total expenditures derived from transfers within Yemen, again mainly coming from a spouse or children (World Bank 2017/06/01).

Rural areas are more dependent on remittances than urban areas. For rural households, remittances from abroad and internal transfers accounted for 34% and 13% of total expenditures, respectively (The World Bank Poverty Survey 2017).

5. Pockets of vulnerability

Pockets of IPC 5 in Dar Sad (Aden) and Al Abr (Hadramaut) are likely attributed to groups of extremely marginalised communities, such as Muhamashin, refugees, Ethiopian and Somali migrants, and newly displaced people, rather than the impact of broader poverty or conflict. This assumption is based on discussions with Yemeni experts in the affected area, cross-checked with available data.

Who are the Muhamashin?

The Muhamashin ('the marginalised ones'), are an ethnic minority who have suffered caste-based discrimination for decades. The Muhamashin mostly live in slum areas on the outskirts of large cities such as Dar Sad in Aden, Sana'a, Al Abr in Hadramaut, and Taizz or Ibb cities. Historically, they suffered from higher rates of unemployment, a lack of basic services, administrative, social and economic discrimination and violence, including gender-based violence towards Muhamashin women. The estimated Muhamashin population in Yemen varies from 500,000 to three million (Minority Rights Group International).

Marginalised groups and displaced communities are often excluded from economic opportunities and social and tribal support networks, which decreases their economic resilience and depletes coping mechanisms which are still available to the remainder of the population. Communities presenting multiple vulnerabilities, for instance displaced Muhamashin, are likely to be affected the most. Reports of further discrimination against displaced Muhamashin were recorded, including discrimination from other affected people and local humanitarian responders (The New Humanitarian 24/03/2016).

The slums of **Dar Sad (Aden)** have hosted marginalised Muhamashin and Ethiopian and Somali migrants for decades. Recently, newly displaced populations, fleeing fighting in neighbouring governorates, have flooded to Dar Sad seeking cheap housing. This has added further pressure to already stressed services and livelihoods systems.

Al Abr is a tribal, Bedouin area in Hadramaut. Al Abr's economy relies on its position as a transit town on the road to Saudi Arabia (the Wadi'a crossing), and on livestock herding. Local sources suggest that large numbers of Muhamashin and IDPs have flooded into Al Abr fleeing fighting in As Sa'ada, Al Jawf, and southern governorates. New arrivals are partly attracted by the possibilities of work or migration to Saudi Arabia. However, they find themselves excluded from the main economic activities available to the local tribes and gather in informal camps.

There is not enough data disaggregated by vulnerability type and it is difficult to distinguish vulnerable groups with the data available. **It is highly likely that other specific vulnerable groups exist in other districts**, hidden within the broader IPC 5 numbers.

Methodology and limitations

ACAPS conducted this analysis to understand the socio-economic conditions in IPC 5 districts to answer the question – **what conditions and factors made these 45 communities so vulnerable to food insecurity?** Why did the broader conflict, fiscal and economic challenges that have affected all Yemenis push pockets of people into IPC 5 levels of food insecurity in these areas, but not in others?

What is a driver of acute food insecurity?

In this analysis product we refer to 'driver' as a factor that is considered to have a determined influence over the direction the future will take (ACAPS 2013). Thus, a driver is not a direct cause of something but a major contributing factor to an event or condition (possibly) happening or developing in one particular way or another.

The analysis team compared available primary data, secondary data review, expert opinion (from Yemeni experts based in Amman) and unstructured interviews with field staff to develop the findings.

The research focussed only on the 45 districts with pockets of IPC 5 (in the absence of food assistance) as classified by the IPC in December 2018. ACAPS carried out our research in February and March 2019 and tested our findings with Yemen and humanitarian experts in April 2019.

To develop the findings, ACAPS

- Built a database of key conflict, demographic, economic, social and humanitarian data available on the 45 IPC 5 districts
- Contracted a Yemeni consultant based in Amman to gather field level contextual information through networks and unstructured phone interviews. ACAPS also gathered information from other Yemeni contacts based in Amman
- Conducted secondary data review of the famine response in Yemen

- Developed 3 detailed district profiles and 12 'lighter touch' district profiles to provide more detailed contextual information on trends
- Held initial scoping workshops to review the initial findings of the data, field interviews, secondary data review and district profiles and identify primary drivers that made each of the 45 districts rank particularly high on the IPC classification. We identified five: conflict; pre-existing poverty; reliance on government salaries; reliance on remittances and; pockets of vulnerable populations
- Classified each district according to the primary driver, reviewed and refined our initial findings based on the data and discussions with experts
- Disseminated and drafted an initial product for review and discussion with humanitarian and Yemen experts in Jordan, Yemen and Lebanon.

ACAPS and IMMAP published the full data set on an interactive dashboard (the online dashboard with an interactive map can be accessed [here](#)).

The excel data set is also available [here](#).

The district profiles are available on request (yahinfo@acaps.org).

Limitations and areas for further study

As discussed in the introduction section, this analysis attempted to understand and rank the most significant driver which made IPC 5 districts score particularly high on the IPC food insecurity scale. Each district is subject to a complex array of economic, social, conflict, humanitarian, and governance challenges which all interact to make an area vulnerable to food insecurity. The findings in this paper should be understood as highlighting key socio-economic trends to inform response planning, not as a full explanation of all of the complex challenges which are currently impacting on communities in Yemen.

This analysis was limited to the 45 districts with pockets of IPC 5. It does not compare or contrast findings against other districts that were not classified as IPC 5. Findings should not be extrapolated nation-wide or to other governorates.

ACAPS assumed that there would be a correlation between high levels of IDPs and pockets of IPC 5 populations. However, this assumption did not hold in our data set. The 45 districts included both districts with high numbers and proportions of IDPs, and districts with low or negligible IDP populations. We could not discern a trend between IDP numbers and IPC 5 classification. This was surprising. There is a good level of information from needs assessments and targeted studies to show that many IDPs are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Why was this trend not reflected in the 45 IPC 5 districts? It may be that our data set was too narrow. We recognise that properly understanding the relationship between IDP numbers and food insecurity would require a broader study. However, ACAPS also believes that this could point to differing levels of vulnerability *within* IDP groups. Marginalised displaced people, like Muhamashin or IDPs displaced outside their traditional family or tribal support structures, may be more vulnerable to food insecurity, whereas IDPs displaced within traditional support structures may fare better. Better understanding IDP profiles and local support structures and coping mechanisms would help shed more light on this question.

There is not enough data disaggregated by vulnerability type and it is difficult to distinguish vulnerable groups with the data available. ACAPS identified two districts where we believe that the presence of vulnerable groups contributed significantly to the IPC 5 ranking. However, it is highly likely that other specific vulnerable groups exist in other districts, hidden within the broader numbers.

The analysis of drivers of food insecurity is supported by primary and secondary information from humanitarian and development partners, as well as media sources. Such information is often not disaggregated at district level, but extrapolated from local knowledge and governorate-level data. ACAPS does not have access to household-level famine risk monitoring surveys. Including this data would further strengthen the analysis.

For those districts where primary and/or secondary data was missing or very limited, analysis was produced through assumptions, thus the evidence base is not always given.

The findings of this paper should not be used to suggest that humanitarian response focus only on IPC 5 districts. 190 districts would be classified as IPC Phase 4 (Severe) in the absence of humanitarian food assistance. The UN has identified 104 of these communities, containing almost one-third of the country's population, with a convergence of complex, multi-sectoral needs. Without urgent action, these communities could fall into IPC 5. By focusing on the 45 current IPC 5 pockets, we hope

to provide a snapshot that helps to inform the response needed to prevent further deterioration of food security throughout Yemen, not to limit future response targeting.

Any comments or suggestions for improvements are welcome.

Please contact us via yahinfo@acaps.org

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This product would not have been possible without the time and expertise given by many Yemeni experts in Amman and inside Yemen. Any insights in this analysis are due to their local knowledge, thoughtful insights, and patient explanations of Yemen's complex and rich history.

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