

The Health system in Yemen is close to collapse and 13 million people are at risk of starvation. Most affected are children

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Amara is held by her father, Omar*, in the Save the Children-supported health facility. 10-month-old Amara* is from Hajjah governorate in northern Yemen and suffers from Severe Acute Malnutrition.*

PHOTO CREDIT: Claire Nicoll / Save the Children

The United Nations has issued a warning that Yemen could experience the worst famine seen in the past 100 years.

Despite the cessation of major hostilities in April this year, ground fighting is still taking place in Marib, Al-Jawf and Taiz, claiming dozens of lives and overburdening existing health facilities. Yemen is facing a growing humanitarian catastrophe as health workers are either forced to leave the area or are staying and risking their lives to help innocent civilians caught up in the deadly conflict. Yemen's

health system was already struggling and is now under enormous strain. The health workers who remain in the country are unable to provide even basic care.

Fighting has reached 21 of the country's 22 governorates (provinces) and more than 4,000 people have been killed by weapons of war, according to the United Nations.

More than half of the people have little access to basic health care, and less than 45% of the hospitals are still able to provide any form of health care.

Thousands of people have died from the outbreak of cholera in 2017. By December 2017, the outbreak of cholera in Yemen had infected one million people. Despite cholera being a treatable disease, thousands of people have died due to lack of availability of basic medical facilities.

In addition to cholera, other contagious diseases such as diphtheria are spreading in the country. A lack of access to safe drinking water is compounding the ongoing health crisis as is absence of immunisation and preventive programs.

More than 80% of Yemen's population lacks food, fuel, drinking water and access to health care services, leaving the population vulnerable to diseases that can generally be cured or eradicated elsewhere in the world.

Yemeni children are literally starving to death and the world has seen the dreadful images of small children just skin and bones, their bodies bloated, and too weak to lift their heads and limbs, on the nightly news on their television screens. Yet the world has failed to act as this disaster has been brought about by politics, not failure of crops due to droughts that have raised the sympathy of the world in other famines. While mass convoys of food, medicine and health workers are needed, the political situation is not

conducive to their entry given the prior attacks on these forms of aid.

Update: October 23. Closing of the Port city of Hudaydah (Hodeidah) has further exacerbated the problem by closing one of the last entry points for food and medicine.

Helping these gentle and good people requires a few brave steps. The ordinary people of Yemen require, peace and normalcy and a great deal of assistance to restore their ordinary lives that have been robbed from them.

Some NGOs are currently working in Yemen. For those who cannot directly assist, NGOs working in Yemen's conflict and disaster zones need to be supported. Save the Children welcomes such support from world doctors and the public and can be contacted on:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.au/donate/more-ways-to-give/current-appeals/yemencrisis>

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The following pictures and reports come from Save The Children currently working on the ground.



Razan was seriously injured in an airstrike when fleeing violence in Hodeidah, Yemen. Eight-year-old Razan* seriously injured her eye when she was hit by shrapnel during an airstrike in Hodeidah. When she was injured, she was fleeing the violence with her family. After she was injured, she suffered at home in pain for five days as her family couldn't afford the cost of transport to hospital. Save the Children referred Razan to a specialist hospital for emergency surgery and is providing psychosocial support to help her begin to come to terms with her experiences. PHOTO CREDIT: Mohammed Awadh / Save the Children*



Sabreen*, one year old, suffers from Cholera.
PHOTO CREDIT: Ali Ashwal / Save the Children



Suha*, two and a half, lives in Haboor district in Amran governorate, Yemen.
She suffers from severe malnutrition and, as a result, is unable to eat, walk or sit. Suha is receiving treatment at the Save the Children-supported health facility in Haboor.
PHOTO CREDIT: Mohammed Awadh / Save the Children