

# CRISISINSIGHT

## YEMEN CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

August – October 2019



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The **Yemen Crisis Impact Overview** is published every two months to provide decision makers with a short, accessible overview of key trends and emerging challenges that may affect humanitarian needs in Yemen.

The product combines trends in key conflict and humanitarian data with daily media monitoring, secondary data review, and ongoing joint analysis with a broad spectrum of Yemen analysts.

This report covers August to October 2019. Read our analysis of June – August trends [here](#).

Have we got anything wrong? Do you have ideas for other issues we should look at? Write to us on [yahinfo@acaps.org](mailto:yahinfo@acaps.org)

*We made minor editorial updates on 16 December to clarify food and fuel price graphs.*

### RELIABILITY



ACAPS has a high degree of confidence in the reliability of this report as it is based on primary data analysis, secondary data review, and joint review by Yemen experts. However, we do risk availability bias (focussing more on issues where there is information available), and more of our analysis focuses on the western part of the country than the east.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

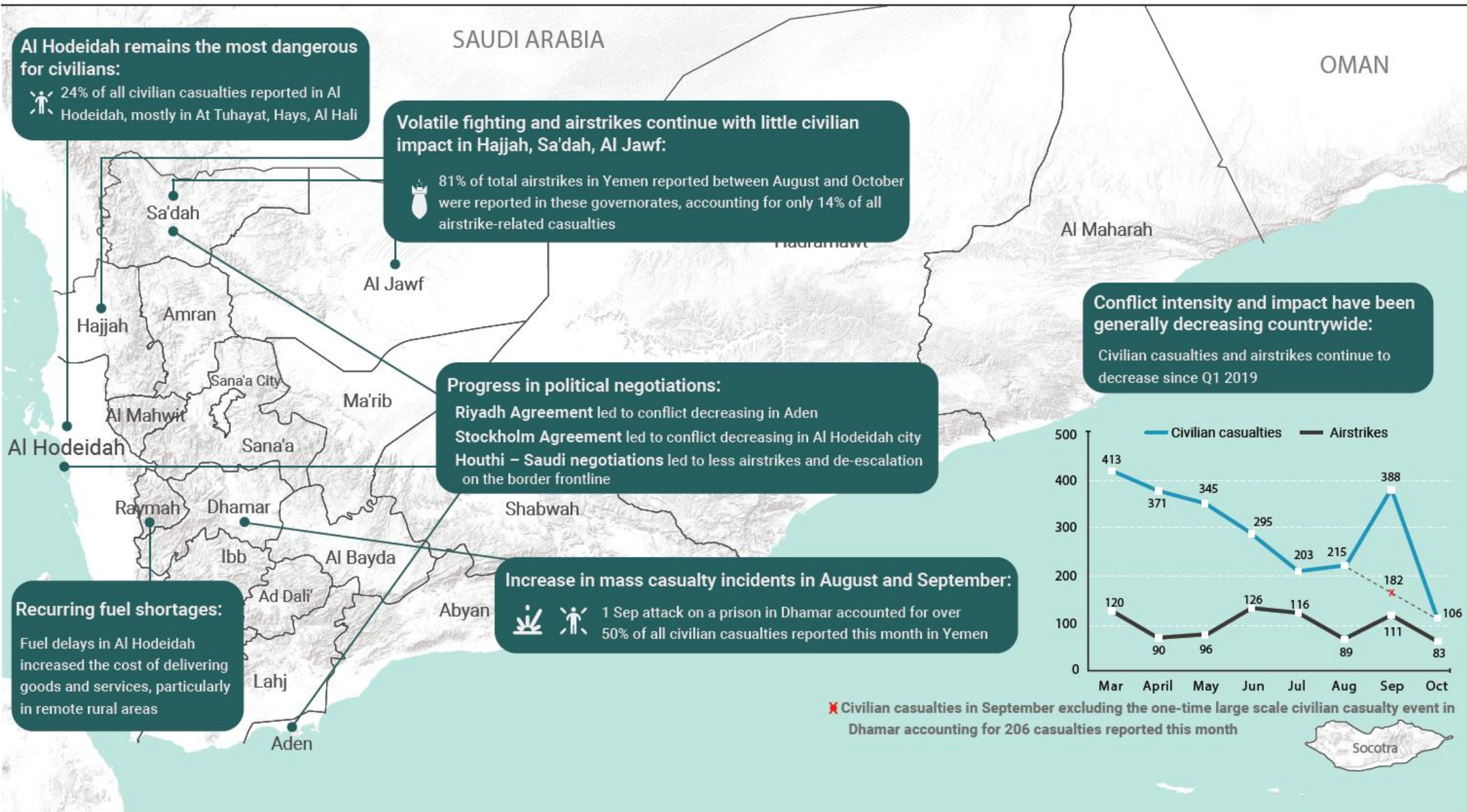
Map – Humanitarian developments in Yemen	p. 3
Key trends in the last three months	p. 4
Outlook	p. 5
Contextual highlights	p. 6
Conflict trends	p. 7
Socio-economic trends	p. 8
Humanitarian impact	p. 10
Risk update	p. 11
Limitations and information gaps	p. 12

## METHODOLOGY

ACAPS develops the Yemen Crisis Impact Overview every two months by:

- Maintaining a core dataset of around 90 cross-sectoral indicators (quantitative and qualitative) at the district level (see ACAPS' [core data set](#))
- Conducting analysis of key conflict, displacement, economic, social, and humanitarian indicators to identify trends
- Daily monitoring of international and Yemeni media and social media in English and Arabic
- Secondary data review of key analysis products published on Yemen (see ACAPS' [metadatabase](#))
- Regular joint analysis with operational and analysis experts working on Yemen to test and refine assumptions
- Quality review by ACAPS' expert readers group to try to identify and address errors and bias.

# Humanitarian developments in Yemen: August - October 2019



# 6 KEY TRENDS

## AUGUST – OCTOBER 2019

### 1. Conflict intensity and violence have generally been decreasing countrywide



The number of conflict-related fatalities countrywide has been decreasing since June and reached its lowest level for 2019 in October.

### 2. Access and operational environment for humanitarian is deteriorating, particularly in northern Yemen



The incidents of violence against humanitarian doubled in August to September compared to the previous two months. 80% of all incidents were reported in the north.

### 3. Conflict in Yemen is increasingly based on economic rivalry between the parties rather than active fighting



Petrol and diesel prices rose by 17% from August to October 2019, and cooking gas by 35%.

### 4. The conflict in Aden and other southern governorates increased protection concerns for 'northerners' living in the south



They were subject to killing, arrest, detention, physical assault, seizure of personal valuables, forced closure of businesses, and deportation by STC aligned forces.

### 5. Between August and October, approximately 27,300 migrants entered Yemen, predominantly from Ethiopia and Somalia



Migrants arriving at coastal and urban areas are at significant risk of arbitrary detention, murder, torture, and sexual violence.

### 6. Torrential rains and flash flooding affected more than 79,000 people across Yemen between August and October, causing widespread damage to houses, public infrastructure, and livestock



The most affected areas included Al Hodeidah and Al Mahwit governorates in August and southern and central governorates in September and October.



## OUTLOOK

**Yemen is at a crossroads.** On the one hand, positive political developments between the warring parties in the last few months showed that political solutions can significantly reduce the intensity of conflict. At the same time, humanitarian space is shrinking in areas where needs are highest and economic warfare is increasing the cost of basic commodities and services, beyond what many Yemenis can afford.

**In the coming three months, needs are likely to increase due to the winter season and access is likely to deteriorate due to institutional and bureaucratic challenges.**

Winter in Yemen varies depending on the area. During winter, the country experiences cool temperatures and frequent frost, particularly in central and northern governorates. Temperatures range from 19°C to below 0°C at its coldest, with occasional rain (though the rainy season is over). IDPs living in makeshift shelters and collective centres are likely to experience cold temperatures the most and need comprehensive winterisation kits. Many IDPs are burning trash to keep warm (Shelter Cluster 1/10/2019, UNHCR 25/10/2019).

**Winter conditions are likely to exacerbate illnesses.** Burning waste to keep warm is likely to contribute to the increase of respiratory illnesses among IDPs, especially **if there is another fuel crisis (moderately likely).**

**Conflict intensity in the South will largely depend on the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement.** ACAPS expects that implementation will be difficult due to unrealistic deadlines and the possibility that southern groups left out of the deal could act as spoilers. Nevertheless, the ongoing political process will likely provide at least temporarily improved security with fighting limited to rare localised clashes in Abyan and Shabwah. These are not likely to have a high impact on civilians.

**De-escalation in the South could see the Government of Yemen and the Saudi-led Coalition refocus efforts against the Houthis.** This might lead to more fighting on the strategic frontlines of Al Hodeidah, Ad Dali', Ta'iz and Al Bayda. While negotiations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the Houthis contributed to a de-escalation of conflict along Yemen's northern border, a full peace deal is still some way off. Both the Houthis and Saudi Arabia continue to threaten to restart their attacks. Any escalation in airstrikes or attacks on Saudi territory are likely to trigger renewed conflict with higher numbers of civilian casualties.

**Access is likely to deteriorate across the northern governorates,** limiting freedom of movement and further delaying the signing of project agreements due to a tense relationship between the newly established Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation (SCMCHA) and the international community, following the recent push to improve humanitarian space in

areas governed by the Houthis. This is likely to trigger further problems with visas, interference with activities and the security of humanitarian staff.

## LOOKING BACK ON THE AUGUST OUTLOOK

In August, ACAPS expected the conflict in Aden to continue with less intensity over the next three months. Political negotiations (the Jeddah talks) succeeded in de-escalating the conflict in September and October. However, sporadic clashes with little civilian impact continue to occur and there is an ongoing risk of renewed fighting.

As we feared in August, northerners in Aden and the south continue to face severe protection concerns. Unfortunately, there is not enough information to determine the current scale of discrimination.

The risk of recurrent currency devaluation and price hikes due to competition over food imports manifested in September. Fuel shortages led to increased water and food prices, exacerbating food insecurity for vulnerable households.

Look back on our [June - August 2019 analysis](#) here.

## RISK UPDATE

Since the last Crisis Impact Overview, ACAPS adjusted three risks and identified a new risk to watch in the forthcoming weeks. [Read our risk analysis on page 11.](#)

**Prolonged urban conflict between STC and Government of Yemen in the south**  
(downgraded: low probability, medium impact)

**Reduced humanitarian funding and shrinking humanitarian space increases Yemeni households' unmet needs**  
(downgraded: medium probability, moderate impact)

**Breakdown in the peace process leads to escalation of conflict in Al Hodeidah exacerbating food insecurity and increasing the spread of cholera**  
(probability: medium, impact: major)

**On watch: Power wrangling around fuel imports between the Houthis and GoY leads to increased food insecurity and the breakdown in health, water and sanitation services**  
(probability: high, impact: very high)

[Read our Risk Overview for July – December](#) here.

## CONTEXTUAL HIGHLIGHTS

The humanitarian situation in Yemen from August to October 2019 saw some improvement. Progress in peace negotiations decreased conflict and violence against civilians. Violent clashes and airstrikes continue, but more often target sparsely inhabited and mountainous areas, with less impact on civilians. At the same time, economic rivalry between parties to the conflict resulted in fuel shortages, increasing the cost of transporting basic commodities and cutting health, water and sanitation services. **The operating environment for humanitarians in the north has become much more restrictive.**

The three ongoing political processes: the Jeddah talks, Stockholm Agreement negotiations, and informal negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis reduced conflict in areas subject to the negotiations, although a lot still needs to be done to properly implement each agreement.

**Conflict in southern Yemen de-escalated in September and October, following violent clashes in August** between the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the Government of Yemen (GOY). Fighting in August caused more than 60 civilian casualties in Aden, Lahj, Abyan, and Shabawah. The STC ousted the GOY and took control of Aden for over two months (Security Council Report August 2019, Security Council Report October 2019). **Saudi Arabia managed to formally reunite the warring parties through the Riyadh Agreement, signed on 5 November 2019.** The agreement formally returns the GOY to Yemen and stipulates that the STC will become part of a new government, which should be formed within thirty days of signing.

While the Riyadh agreement gives the STC a seat in the government, and at the negotiating table for future talks, it postpones the broader issue of southern independence. Additionally, the tight timeline for the implementation of the agreement will be very difficult to achieve. **Political agreements that avoid addressing the underlying drivers of the conflict and include loosely formulated provisions have proven notoriously difficult to implement in Yemen.** The major parties to the conflict, especially Saudi Arabia, appear committed to reaching a negotiated settlement, but a collapse of talks and return to conflict cannot be ruled out (Reuters 26 October 2019). Small clashes continued between STC and Hadi government aligned forces across southern Yemen in October and November.

The **Stockholm Agreement** also made progress. The UN established five observation points in Al Hodeidah city in October, with UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) observers deployed to monitor the truce (UN 9/11/2019). This saw a drop in reported ceasefire violations in October compared to the previous month, including an 80% drop in civilian casualties in Al Hali, Al Mina, and Al Hawak districts of Al Hodeidah city. At the same time, shelling and battles continued at a similar intensity

along the frontlines in the south of Al Hodeidah governorate, away from the immediate area monitored by the observation points.

In late September, the Houthis unilaterally released 290 detainees included in the list of 7,000 names submitted as part of the Stockholm Agreement prisoner exchange. The GOY and Houthis then exchanged up to 30 prisoners in October (Xinhuanet 11/11/2019). This was the first positive step towards implementation of the prisoner exchange file of the Stockholm Agreement after months of stalemate.

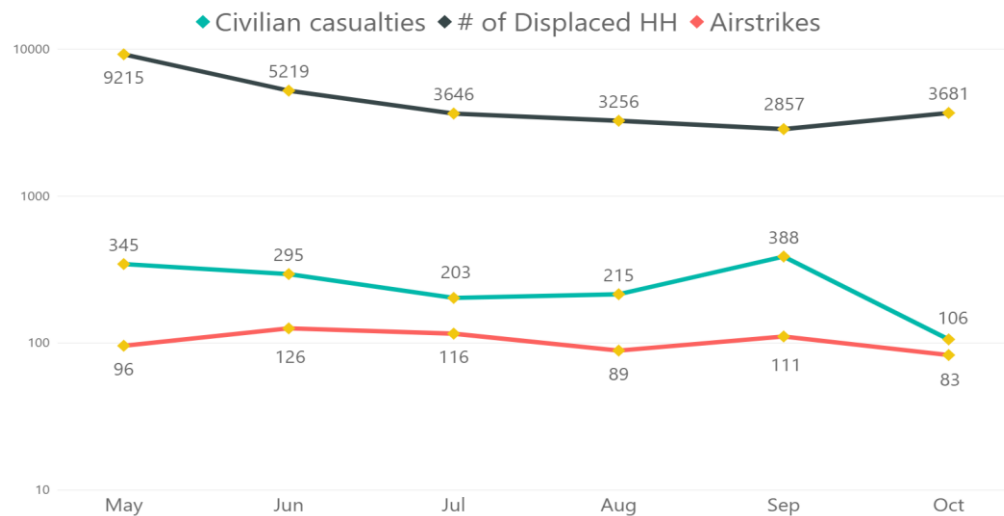
**The Houthis and Saudi Arabia have stepped up back-channel political negotiations since September.** On 14 September, the Houthis claimed responsibility for an attack which damaged Saudi Aramco oil facilities, which process the majority of Saudi's crude output. The attack temporarily knocked out half of Saudi's oil production. The incident sparked fears of a possible regional escalation, with Saudi and the US casting blame on Iran. However, on 20 September, the Houthis announced a unilateral halt to cross-border attacks on KSA territory. Saudi Arabia in turn relaunched back-channel negotiations with the Houthis in mid October (with Saudi officials confirming the talks on 6 November 2019). It is too early to determine any long-lasting consequences of this political process. The Houthis did not conduct any cross-border attacks on KSA territory in October. The Saudi-led coalition also reduced the number of airstrikes conducted in Yemen to the lowest levels of 2019. However, the negotiations are fragile and conflict could re-escalate. Conflict and airstrikes continue across the country and the Houthis have repeatedly threatened to recommence their attacks on Saudi territory if coalition airstrikes do not completely stop (Financial Times 11/10/2019, DW 6/11/2019, Wall Street Journal 27/9/2019).

**Conflict in the south exposed cracks in the Saudi-led Coalition.** On 29 August, the UAE conducted a series of airstrikes on GoY positions in Aden and Abyan in an unprecedented move against forces loyal to its coalition partner. However, the UAE and Saudi collaborated closely in preparation for the Riyadh talks (Security Council Report September 2019). On 30 October, the UAE announced the withdrawal of its forces from Aden and handed control over to Saudi and Yemeni forces, while keeping their strategic positions in other southern governorates (Aljazeera 30 October 2019). Sudan has also been withdrawing its forces from Yemen in recent months, mainly from Al Hodeidah governorate, reportedly in preparation for a full withdrawal by the end of 2019 (Sana'a Center 10/2019).

**Al Qaeda and Islamic State took advantage of the vacuum in the south and intensified attacks against pro-Hadi and STC forces in Aden, Abyan, Al Bayda and Hadramawt.** There were less clashes reported between AQAP and IS compared to earlier in the year (ACLED 27 October 2019).

## TRENDS IN CONFLICT

Conflict has generally been decreasing across the country. Monthly conflict events have been declining since March, mostly driven by a drop in shelling and airstrikes and a decrease in battle intensity (ACLEDD 31/10/2019). Although most frontlines remained active between August and October, the conflict was most violent in the south (between the STC and the GoY), in Hajjah (Harad frontline), Ad Dali' (Al Fajir, Qa'atabah frontlines), and Al Jawf. **The number of overall conflict-related fatalities countrywide has been decreasing since June and reached the lowest level for 2019 in October** (ACLEDD 30/10/2019).



Source: CIMP, Yemen Data Project, IOM DTM

Civilian casualties have been decreasing since March. October 2019 saw the lowest number of civilian casualties in two years (106 civilian casualties). September saw an increase due to one large mass casualty incident – an airstrike on a prison in Dhamar on 1 September 2019 that killed 156 people and injured 50. However, the number of civilian casualties radically decreased elsewhere in the country and were at their lowest levels in 2019.

Al Hodeidah still has the highest number of civilian casualties, recording 25% of all civilian casualties in 2019. The southern district of At Tuhayta remains the most dangerous for civilians.

The number of airstrikes continues to decrease – 15% less airstrikes were reported between August – October than in the previous three months. The airstrike intensity increased slightly in September, but remained below the average for 2019.

In September most casualties were caused by the Dhamar prison strike, which accounted for more than half of all civilian casualties for the month. There were **nine large-scale conflict events between August and September resulting in more than 30 fatalities, 50% of all events of this scale reported in 2019**. The conflict is becoming more localised and focused on strategic frontlines, with conflict intensity overall decreasing countrywide.

Civilian casualties decreased. However, civilian fatalities increased slightly, reaching the highest level in 2019 in September because of the airstrike on the prison in Dhamar. However, excluding this one event, the levels of civilian fatalities in August and September would be lower than in the previous two months. In October, civilian fatalities decreased further, reaching its lowest level in two years (CIMP 31/10/2019).

## ACCESS

Humanitarian access is deteriorating across Yemen, driven predominantly by bureaucratic and institutional challenges. The operating environment has further deteriorated in the north compared to the previous months, with more movement restrictions, detentions, and delays in visas. Given the scale of the current challenges, humanitarian agencies are increasingly likely to question their ability to program in the north, which is home to 70% of people in need.

The humanitarian community has been increasing pressure on local authorities in the north to increase humanitarian space. In October, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) sent a letter to the Houthi authorities requesting concessions around five key issues: restrictions on movement; pressure to sign restrictive Principle Agreement's; delays in the signing of sub-agreements impeding humanitarian operations; interference in activities and procurement, and; obstacles in carrying out humanitarian assessments. The donor community and INGOs supported the letter and a pressure strategy, including withdrawing incentives for certain institutions.

As a result, the Houthi Supreme Political Council dissolved NAMCHA and announced the creation of a new body - the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation (SCMCHA). The new institution remains under the leadership of the previous Head of NAMCHA. Immediately, SCMCHA began to increase access constraints and launched a media campaign targeting the UN and some INGOs (SCMCHA website).

Incidents of violence against humanitarians and humanitarian operations increased in the north. This included assault, intimidation, and arbitrary detention of staff. Both national and international staff were arbitrarily detained by the authorities and some humanitarian workers were told their visas would not be renewed. Countrywide, incidents of violence against humanitarians doubled in the August to September period compared

to the last two months, with 80% of all incidents were reported in the north (OCHA 24/11/2019).

**Restrictions on movement due to restrictive regulations and road blockages** continue to disrupt deliveries of assistance and staff travel. Movement permissions are often used as a means to request more information from humanitarian organisations about their staff, beneficiaries, and activities.

**Interference in humanitarian activities** like local beneficiary registration or obstruction of needs assessments also intensified, particularly in Al Hodeidah and Hajjah. Some humanitarian premises in those governorates were occupied by security forces (OCHA 24/11/2019).

**6.7 million people in Yemen were affected by operational access constraints and delays in sub-agreement approvals in August and September. This is 37% increase from the June-July period**, when 4.9 million people were affected. People in need were directly restricted from reaching assistance by the conflict, particularly in the south, but also near other active frontlines. People were trapped by fighting in Aden or unable to travel longer distances to access basic services (OCHA 24/11/2019).

**Discrimination against northerners** limited access to assistance in southern governorates. ‘Northerners’ were forcibly removed from areas under the control of the STC and faced serious discrimination and restrictions accessing basic services. Some ‘northerners’ reported they feared moving at all due to existing protection threats towards people of northern origin.

**In August, fighting in the south affected humanitarian movements due to denied travel permits and self-imposed security restrictions.** Access improved in the following months, but is likely to deteriorate in the event of renewed fighting. GoY and Saudi Arabia retaking control of institutions is likely to temporarily increase bureaucratic and institutional challenges due to internal changes in some procedures and personnel. Fighting in Aden in August temporarily disrupted some programmes due to evacuations of humanitarian staff and suspension of operations, arbitrary arrests, road closures, and airport and port disruptions. Most were able to quickly resume operations after the fighting subsided. **Humanitarian staff in Aden of northern origin (who make up a key part of the international response) continue to face challenges moving freely due to fear or detention or reprisals at checkpoints.**

## DISPLACEMENT

**Conflict related displacement has been steadily decreasing since April, reaching its lowest level of 2019.** Between August and October more than 9,700 households (estimated more than 58,000 individuals) were displaced, 50% less than the previous three months.

**Most of the displacement between August and October occurred in Ta’iz (up to 30%) and in Ad Dali’ (over 20%).** Qa’atabah and Ad Dali’ districts in Ad Dali’ governorate and Az Zuhrah district in Al Hodeidah governorate recorded the highest levels of displacement. Most of the IDPs in Ad Dali’ were displaced as a result of intense fighting in Qa’atabah over the past few months. IDPs in Ad Dali’ live in harsh conditions in schools and collective sites, with the constant risk of eviction (ECHO 4/11/2019). In Al Zuhrah, most IDPs arrived in August due to heavy flooding within the district and conflict in Abs, Hajjah governorate.

**Up to 1,900 households (approximately 11,200 individuals) were displaced in August from Aden, Abyan, and Shabwah due to the conflict.** The majority of them moved to Ta’iz and were in acute need of food, income, financial assistance, shelter and NFIs.

**Conflict in Aden and other governorates in the south dramatically increased protection concerns for people from the north residing in Aden and other southern governorates.** Between 2 and 4 August, some 2,400 northerners from Aden and Tur Al Bahah district in Lahj were forcibly deported from the governorate. Recurrent reports of arbitrary detentions and deportations have continued, but there is no information available on a current scale (Debrief 8/12/2019). In August alone up to 4,000 people were either deported or fled to Ta’iz, Lahj, and governorates in the north. Those that remained are reportedly too afraid to leave their homes to work or to access essential goods and services such as food, water, fuel, health services, and aid.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS

As fighting cools down in many parts of Yemen, the economic war continues to push the price of food and basic services beyond what many ordinary Yemenis can afford to pay. The Yemen economy, largely dependent on imports, has become a battleground between the Houthis and the GoY with both sides competing to attract and control hard cash reserves they can use to fund (and tax) imports.

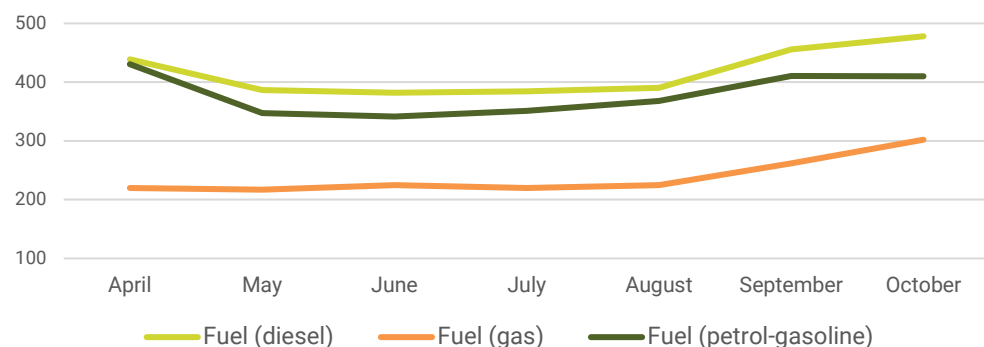
**Fuel continues to be the main area of competition.** Fuel, and diesel in particular, has historically been a key source of elite corruption in Yemen (Phillips 2011). **On 10 September 2019, the GOY began to enforce Decree 49, requiring fuel importers to pay import taxes and customs fees to Aden.** Houthi authorities encouraged fuel importers not to comply. Ten fuel ships, carrying 163,00 metric tons of fuel, began to build up off the port of Al Hodeidah, with both sides trading blame for the crisis. In mid-October, the GOY and Houthis agreed on a temporary solution, allowing importers to pay taxes to the local branch of the central bank in Al Hodeidah for local salaries.

**Fuel is now available in the market but the core issue – who controls fuel imports and revenues – has not been resolved.** With very limited fuel reserves in the country, there is a high likelihood of further fuel disputes sparking rapid price rises and interruptions to



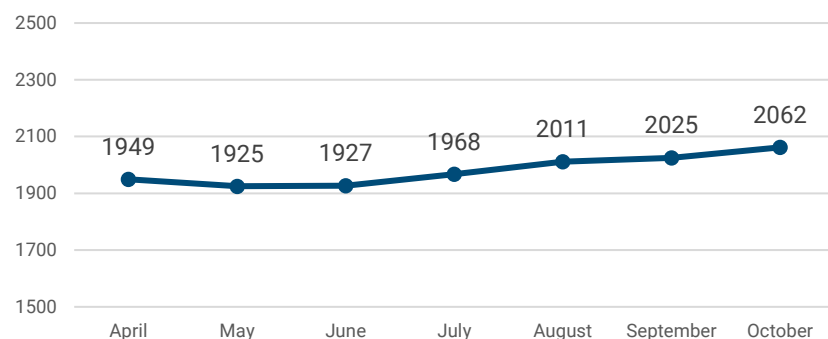
electricity, water, sanitation and health services unless there is progress towards coordinated economic management in Yemen. Fuel also continues to be a key point of competition in the south, with the authorities in Hadramawt cutting oil exports in late September for almost two weeks in protest over unpaid salaries, high prices for electricity fuel and revenue sharing (Sana'a Centre 10/11/2019, Debrief 1/10/2019).

Fuel prices



**Petrol and diesel prices rose by 17% from August to October 2019, and cooking gas increased by 35%.** On black markets, the price of fuel reached over 1,000 YER/litre, almost three times the official price. Many fuel stations were closed or limited operating hours, which caused long queues and 2-3 days of waiting time (UNICEF 31/10/2019). This made it more difficult for households to meet basic needs or pay for transport to access jobs and services. Fuel price hikes increased the cost of transporting food, with basic food prices (wheat, sugar, beans, oil, salt) increasing by 3% from August to October, reaching their highest level in 12 months (WFP dataviz 2/12/2019).

Food basket price



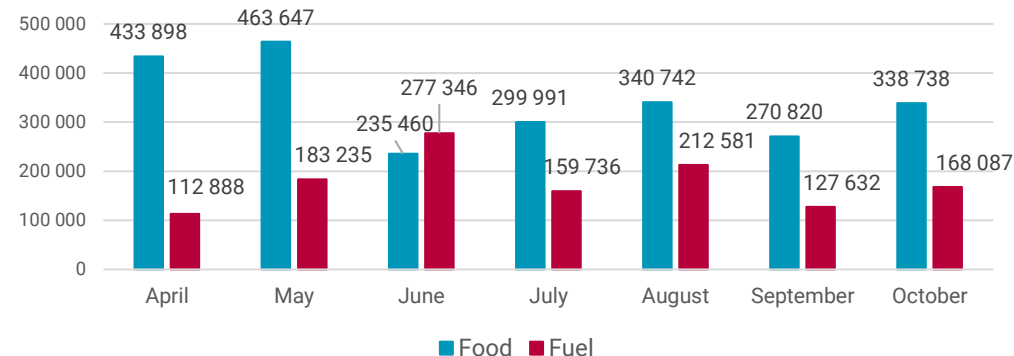
**38.5% of households surveyed by WFP recorded inadequate food consumption in October, up from 34.5% in August.** Al Bayda and Raymah recorded the highest rates of poor or borderline food security (50%). More than 80% of households surveyed by WFP reported borrowing money to buy food (WFP VAM 10/2019).

**Fuel shortages led to electricity cuts across Yemen and disruptions to piped water networks and water trucking services.** Operational agencies reported that the central water systems in Ibb, Dhamar and Al Mahwit shut down completely for several weeks in October. Water networks and health services remain vulnerable to future fuel cuts (Oxfam 22/10/2019, OCHA 4/11/2019).

During August to October 2019, the Yemeni riyal (YER) fluctuated between 595 to 602 to the USD country wide. **The STC takeover of Aden in August 2019 caused a slight dip in the value of the YER down to around 610-617, its lowest level since October 2018.** Importers, money lenders, and traders were concerned the Central Bank may not be able to continue to lend to importers and pay salaries. However, the Central Bank released a number of statements confirming it would continue to lend at the fixed rate of 506 YER to the USD and Saudi Arabia deployed special forces troops to protect the CBY building in Aden.

By 1 December 2019, the value of the YER had increased slightly, reaching around 580 in Sana'a and 590 in Aden, around YER10 less in value than the first week of August. **The Yemeni riyal remains vulnerable to further devaluation, especially as the coming few months are likely to see a spike in demand for fuel imports to replenish depleted stocks** (fuel imports are a major drain on scarce stocks of hard currency). The CBY's ability to stabilise the YER continues to depend almost wholly on ongoing funding from Saudi Arabia. Saudi has reportedly pledged another tranche of USD 2 billion as part of the Riyadh agreement to replenish current stocks, which are close to depleted. Without this, the YER is likely to rapidly collapse in value (Al Ameen 25/11/2019, Sana'a Centre 08/2019, Al Mashad Al Yemeni 1/12/2019, Al Masdar 28/10/2019).

Imports



## HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

**The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains serious due to conflict and economic decline.** Conflict in Aden and the south in August raised protection concerns. Fuel shortages increased food prices and caused cuts in health, water and sanitation services. Flooding caused widespread damage to houses, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

**The most vulnerable groups between August and October were ‘northerners’ living in southern governorates, vulnerable IDPs living in informal settlements exposed to flooding, and refugees and migrants who continue to face unlawful detention and serious protection risks.**

**Northerners:** Some STC leaders attributed blame for a Houthis attack targeting a military parade on 1 August 2019 in Al Buraiqaeh district Aden, to people originating from northern governorates living in the south (‘northerners’). IDPs and workers from the north faced collective retribution, including physical assault, killing, arrest, document confiscation, seizure of personal valuables, forced closure of businesses, and forced deportation out of Aden and Lahj governorates. Although the situation has been calmer since August, humanitarian actors report that ‘northerners’, particularly IDPs, have been experiencing psychological and mental trauma from the climate of fear and violence (UNOCHA 28/08/2019).

**Migrants:** Between August and October, approximately 27,300 migrants entered Yemen, predominantly from Ethiopia and Somalia, bringing the number of new arrivals since the beginning of the year to around 120,700. Migrants arriving at coastal and urban areas are at significant risk of arbitrary detention, killing, torture, and sexual violence. Up to 80% of all migrants are detained during their journey through Yemen. IOM estimates that around 160,000 migrants will enter Yemen in 2019, including many unaccompanied or separated children. Child migrants are often unaware of the dangers on the route to Yemen, including exposure to extreme heat, conflict and violence, and human trafficking (DTM 16/10/2019, Sana’a Centre 10/2019).

**Acute fuel shortages** were reported between August and September due to competition between the Houthis and the Government of Yemen over control of fuel imports, customs revenue and taxation. Fuel shortages affected WASH provision, healthcare services, and impacted food assistance operations in northern Yemen. Almost 475,000 people in Shabwah and Hadramawt suffered from water shortages in October. Water pumping hours are still limited in rural Al Hodeidah and IDPs in Sana'a and Amran continued to have reduced water provision (OCHA 27/10/2019).

The shortages have prompted some mobile clinics to suspend operations, while high fuel prices have hampered patients’ ability to travel to health facilities for treatment, especially those who live in remote areas. More than 70% of Yemen’s hospitals rely on fuel-powered generators to operate equipment for lifesaving medical services. Food transporters had

to purchase fuel from the black market or use contingency fuel supplies to continue operations, while increased fuel costs made it more difficult for people to travel to food distribution points (USAID 8/11/2019).

**Flooding:** Torrential rains and flash flooding across Yemen in August to October caused widespread damage to houses, public infrastructure, and livestock. Around 59,000 people were affected by flooding in late July and August. 17,000 were affected in September and October (WFP 29/08/2019, OCHA 3/10/2019). Al Hodeidah and Al Mahwit were most affected in August, while southern and central governorates (Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Hadramout) were more affected in September and October. In Aden, flooding in September damaged houses and cut off electricity for around 15 hours due to damage to the grid.

IDP sites were most impacted by flooding. Many IDPs had to relocate to public buildings, including schools, or stay with relatives. IDPs in Al Hodeidah, Al Mahwit, Sana’a, and Hajjah were most affected (OCHA 9/10/2019). In October, IDP sites were damaged in Aden city, Marib city, Tuban district in Lahj governorate, and Khanfir district in Abyan governorate. Many IDPs lost their belongings in flash floods (OCHA 3/10/2019).

**Cyclones:** Two cyclones formed in late October in the Arabian Sea and threatened to hit Yemen. Neither cyclone (Kyarr and Maha) made landfall. Heavy rainfall in late October and early November caused flooding in Socotra but did not cause casualties or damage critical infrastructure. Mainland Yemen saw limited rainfall between 30 October and 7 November, with the Western Highlands registering the highest precipitation levels (30-50mm accumulated rainfall). IDPs in coastal areas were not impacted. Read more ACAPS analysis on cyclones.

**Conflict impact:** Southern governorates (Aden, Abyan, Shabwah) saw an increase in fighting in August, particularly in densely populated areas. People were trapped in their houses and unable to flee for days. The fighting resulted in up to 400 casualties. The majority of casualties were members of military groups, but 63 civilians were killed (25) or wounded (28) in the fighting. Shelling damaged the main water tanks in Craiter and Mualla, temporarily disrupting access to safe drinking water in Aden for several days. Local hospitals reported overcrowding and a lack of medical supplies due to the influx of patients with conflict-related injuries (OHCHR 10/09/2019).

## RISK UPDATES

Since the last Crisis Impact Overview (August 2019), ACAPS adjusted three risks and identified a new risk to watch in the coming weeks:

### **Prolonged urban conflict between STC and Government of Yemen in the south**

**(downgraded: low probability, medium impact)**

ACAPS estimates that the risk of renewed clashes or prolonged urban conflict between the STC and Government of Yemen (GoY) in the south decreased with the signing of the Riyadh Agreement on 5 November. However, the political gains remain fragile and reversible as the loose formulation of the Riyadh Agreement allows plenty of space for dispute over its interpretation, and the de facto power of STC remains questionable. Looking ahead, ACAPS believes that the Riyadh agreement's success will largely depend on the division of ministries between the STC and GoY. There is a moderate probability that the agreement will fail over mistrust and lack of cooperation in the security and military branches of the new government. At a lower level, local alliances and disagreement over revenue sharing with the GoY creates further tension. The situation could quickly escalate, causing new clashes in Aden with high protection concerns, restricted access to markets and services, and disruption to Aden's airport and port impacting on one million people.

Stability in southern Yemen is further threatened by many animosities and different priorities among southern parties. Separatist groups might disagree to the terms of the accord and could be encouraged to fight for a stake in the new government themselves. Additionally, some anti-Hadi factions might continue to challenge his position and prevent the return of his government to Aden. Increased tensions will challenge the establishment of a stable and meaningful Yemeni government across the southern governorates and limit humanitarian access (Middle East Eye 07/11/2019; Sana'a Centre 05/11/2019; Foreign Affairs 11/11/2019).

### **Reduced humanitarian funding and shrinking humanitarian space increases Yemeni households' unmet needs**

**(downgraded: medium probability, moderate impact)**

The risk that funding shortages would close lifesaving humanitarian programmes, as described in the Crisis Impact Overview in August 2019, was diverted as Saudi Arabia (USD 500 million) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (USD 200 million) made their funding pledges in early October. The USD 700 million disbursements, part of the USD 1.5 billion they pledged in February 2019, stabilised the financial situation for

humanitarian relief in August and September, raising the HRP's funding status to 71% of the USD 4.2 billion requested. Although temporarily suspended programmes resumed in October, the closure has likely increased people's needs. Humanitarian agencies might face problems scaling up programmes quickly enough to meet the new needs.

The probability is very high that severe restrictions on humanitarian operations will remain. Reduced access due to ongoing localised clashes, checkpoints, and increased delays in travel permits in the south are likely to remain until the Riyadh agreement is fully implemented. In the Houthi-controlled north, bureaucratic impediments are severely constricting humanitarian space. As NAMCHA (National Authority for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Recovery) was dissolved in mid-November the new entity, the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation, is now responsible for all matters related to coordination of humanitarian affairs. Humanitarian access is likely to worsen, with severe delays in program approvals (UN SC 07/11/2019; UN SC 31/10/2019; OCHA 27/10/2019).

### **Breakdown in the peace process leads to escalation of conflict in Al Hodeidah exacerbating food insecurity and increasing the spread of cholera**

**(probability: medium, impact: major)**

A major offensive in Al Hodeidah remains a risk; however with a lower probability than in June 2019. The probability of a breakdown of the Stockholm Agreement, signed in December 2018, has decreased over the past six months, though its main stipulations remain largely unimplemented and its positive developments are fragile and reversible.

In November, Saudi Arabia confirmed they had begun negotiations with the Houthis, who in turn suspended attacks on Saudi territory. In October, the UN established four observation points on the outskirts of Al Hodeidah city to monitor the ceasefire. The Houthis and the GoY also released some prisoners between September to November 2019, which could pave the way for further exchanges. In response to the signing of the Riyadh agreement between the STC and the GoY, the Houthis reportedly increased their presence on some frontlines, possibly as a warning sign against a renewed GOY-STC offensive.

Signing the Stockholm agreement reduced violence in Al Hodeidah. Civilian casualties are down 60% compared to 2018. However, Al Hodeidah remains Yemen's most violent city, with over 714 civilian casualties in 2019 (Yemen Akhbar 20/10/2019, CIMP 31/10/2019; MEMO 7/11/2019; Foreign Affairs 11/11/2019; XinhuaNet 11/11/2019; ACLED 09/11/2019).

## On watch: Power wrangling around fuel imports between the Houthis and GoY leads to economic warfare

(probability: low, impact: very high)

Control over fuel is progressively becoming the key driver of tensions and instrument to demonstrate power between the Houthis and GoY. Economic competition and power wrangling over imports of fuel increased between the Houthis and the GoY in September and October. It was the second time that fuel imports were halted due to political tensions after April 2019.

As Yemen is highly import dependent, fuel shortages and a destabilised Yemeni Riyal have directly resulted in increased commodity prices, impacting on service delivery. Similar to April 2019, both sides were able to reach a compromise solution after several weeks, preventing a major civilian catastrophe. However, the situation remains extremely fragile, as the core issues have not been resolved and depleted fuel stocks could again run out in mid to late December.

In early October a scenario-building workshop hosted by ACAPS identified economic warfare as a possible future reality, with an anticipated low probability. Houthi-GoY relations remain unpredictable. The Central Bank in Aden continue to rely heavily on ongoing Saudi financial support to stabilise economic fluctuations. If Saudi Arabia does not continue to back the Yemeni economy, or if we enter a new round of economic competition that cuts off fuel imports for a protracted period, we could see a rapid collapse in the price of the riyal, sharp rises in food prices and the collapse of health, water and sanitation services. [Read the full ACAPS Scenario Report here.](#)

## LIMITATIONS

ACAPS analysis is based **predominantly on publicly available reports and datasets**. This makes us susceptible to availability bias. To mitigate this, ACAPS cross-checks information with operational actors and actively seeks out alternative sources to provide the broadest possible basis for analysis.

The majority of agencies ACAPS consults with engage in humanitarian response **predominantly in the north and west of the country**. We have a less comprehensive understanding of the east of the country and hard to reach areas.

## INFORMATION GAPS

- There is no information on the current situation of the northerners in southern governorates. Following severe protection concerns in August it is important to follow up and determine the current degree of discrimination.
- There is no comprehensive data on flood affected areas. The numbers quoted in the report are indicative, as the publicly available assessments do not clearly state how many people were affected when. Information on the impact of flooding on host communities is very limited.
- There is not enough data on routes and entry points of refugees and migrants travelling to and throughout Yemen. More analysis on their intentions, specific needs, and protection concerns they are facing would be beneficial.

At ACAPS we always strive to improve our work and make the best of our products. We kindly ask you to complete a survey about the quality and accuracy of this report. Your feedback is important to us!

Thanks for your collaboration

[Take our survey](#)