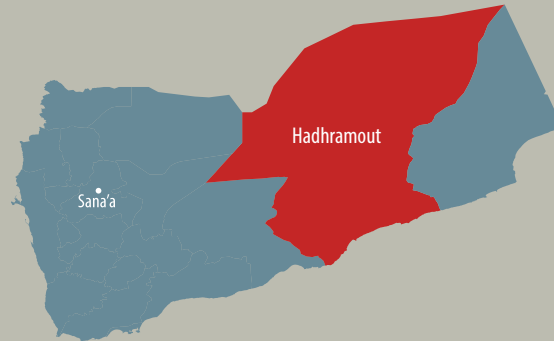





Voices
of

Al Mukalla city Hadhramout governorate



Al Mukalla is considered the most important sea port in Hadhramout governorate. Like other localities in Yemen, the area has been affected by the ongoing violence affecting all aspects of life. Residents are engaged in fisheries, private and public sectors jobs, trading, and vocational works. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) seized the security vacuum and took over the city. Through this focus group discussion, Mukalla residents share their suffering and ways to cope with the current situation.

Main risks

- Persistence of AQAP
- Large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Aden, Al Dhale, Lahj and Abyan
- Food shortages
- Fuel shortages
- Electricity blackouts
- Rising conflicts between host communities and IDPs
- Dengue fever outbreak amongst IDPs

Coping mechanisms

- **Rationalization of water consumption:** Populations of Al Mukalla are rationalizing water consumption by using seawater for domestic use, sparing the potable water for drinking
- **Local Relief Committee:** Al Mukalla residents have established a Local Relief Committee in response to the observed tensions between IDPs and locals. Many local NGOs and local development institutions like Al-Own Foundation have joined this committee. Humanitarian aid is channeled through the committee in charge for them to distribute amongst IDPs



- **Private sector and citizen engagement:** Businessmen from Hadhramout have contributed through NGOs to respond to the pressing needs of IDPs and the community. NGOs, institutions and charitable associations have been able to collect cash and in-kind contributions from citizens to support IDPs
- **Use of alternative financial providers:** The Central Bank of Seyun has initiated the payment of civil servants and employee salaries in Al Mukalla through local exchange points and post offices . Commercial banks have not resumed operations
- **Medical Committees:** To overcome a wider spread of the dengue fever, active NGOs have established medical committees to organize the treatment of patients in locations where IDP presence is high

Opportunities



No localized conflicts:

The area has not yet encountered or had any localized conflicts. Despite tensions encountered, it has not transformed into larger conflict as the LRC has been acting as mediator.



Livelihood diversification for IDPs:

Local development-based institutions have organized business trainings for 50,000 IDPs in 24 Evacuation Centers to support their access to increased livelihoods opportunities. This can be further supported for wider scale impact.



Proactive community:

“The positive thing is that the community mobilizes its available resources to support the poor families and IDPs, the community is proactive and did not wait for humanitarian assistance to arrive. This is a good thing, indeed!” said one of local men interviewed.



Community-based social support:

Al Mukalla enjoys a great deal of social solidarity which goes beyond close family relations. It extends to citizens, CSOs and members of the business community who are uniting to provide assistance to those most in need.

Challenges

Electricity outages:

Electricity cuts off for more than 16 hours a day as a result of fuel shortage that is required to operate many power plants. Since March, no fuel has entered Al Mukalla.

Water scarcity:

Water is supplied every three days rather than daily due to the fuel shortage to run water pumps, so instead of running daily the pumps work every three days on average. This particularly affects women headed households as they are the ones responsible for securing water and other supplies, and are left to find alternative ways for collecting water in the absence of men.

Pressure on CSOs:

Non-profit institutions and charity associations have declared that they can no longer support the communities in need. They are unable to serve increasing numbers of IDPs due to insufficient funding. They have not received any humanitarian aid for them to meet the pressing needs.

Shut down of banking services:

Upon the take-over of Al Mukalla by AQAP militant groups, over USD 1 million was robbed from the local Central bank. Subsequently, commercial banks have suspended their operations resulting into the nonpayment of employees' salaries since April.

Inability to import fuel:

As a result of the AQAP presence and its grip over the district, importing fuel has become difficult. Since the Yemeni government in exile has refused to contact AQAP, and Al Mukalla seaport is under strict international observance.

Sea blockade:

The current sea blockade extends to Al Mukalla port where aid and trade are prevented from freely entering because of the AQAP presence.

Increase numbers of refugees:

Besides the flow of IDPs, Al Mukalla still receives the African refugees who fled from Aden and other war affected southern governorates.

Overwhelming numbers of IDPs: Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) have reached a number of 50,000, according to the latest official statistics the High Relief Committee coming from Aden, Lahj, Abyan and Al Dhale. Host residents of Al Mukalla are likely to encounter food shortages worsened by IDP arrivals. IDPs daily flow rate ranges between 200 – 300 persons/day (most of them from Aden and Abyan).

Outbreak of Dengue fever:

IDPs, particularly those originating from Aden and Lahj suffer from dengue fever—a mosquito-borne tropical disease. The scale of the current outbreak is likely to increase as a result of water scarcity, prevalence of waste, high temperature and lack of electricity.

Increased tensions between IDPs and host communities:

Tensions are heated up between host communities and the IDPs. This is expected to increase in the future should the crisis last longer in light of the continued flow of IDPs. Tensions are ignited as a result of low resources available—food availability and distribution, but also differences in customs and traditions, and the occupation of schools by IDPs. As a result, a few number of IDPs have returned back to Aden as being unable to cope with the distress.

“Voices of” is a series of community-level consultations led by UNDP in Yemen using inclusive focus group discussions that seek to: identify their fragilities, prioritise opportunities and challenges, and highlight the vulnerability of community livelihoods assets to sustain the crisis.



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