UNHCR has released its Critical Funding Needs for Yemen, outlining USD 89.4 M in urgent funding to secure life-saving protection and assistance activities for IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers and host communities. The Funding Needs outline UNHCR’s regular programming activities currently impacted by the ongoing conflict, restricted humanitarian access, heavy rains and flooding, as well as the growing COVID-19 pandemic response. As of 29 April, the Operation remains only 29 per cent funded out of a total USD 211.9 M requirement for 2020. Without the required funds, the Operation is facing an imminent reduction or closure of vital programmes across the country, impacting 655,000 vulnerable IDPs and 281,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

Torrential rains continued to cause deadly flash floods and significant damage to properties and infrastructure in the southern governorates. A preliminary assessment identified some 5,000 IDP families affected, half of which were in Aden and Lahj governorates across some 79 IDP hosting sites. Identified urgent needs included shelter, food and basic household items. UNHCR provided 940 families in Lahj with replacement plastic sheeting to repair damaged shelters, while some 65 families will receive basic household items such as bedding, kitchen sets and solar lamps. In Marib governorate, UNHCR through partner YRC assisted 110 flood affected IDP families with emergency shelter and 120 families with basic household items. Another 95 newly displaced families also received these supplies. During the reporting period, some 140 displaced families temporarily housed in hotels were assessed, and will be provided with cash support, emergency items and protection services, based on their needs.

Following needs assessments, the second cash distribution began for IDPs, targeting 2,400 IDPs, returnees and most vulnerable host community families in the Government of Yemen governorates of Lahj, Hudaydah, Abyan, Shabwah, Taizz, Hadramaut and Al Dhale’e. Each family will receive YER 100,000 (approx. USD 170) to support basic needs and rent payments. In parallel, UNHCR started planning for the third round of cash distributions for some 1,680 families; the payments are expected to be carried out in the coming weeks.

During the first three months of 2020, UNHCR Yemen conducted household assessments for 18,230 IDP families and provided emergency items such as shelter, mattresses and kitchen sets to 13,200 families. However, final results are expected to be much higher due to UNHCR’s comprehensive response to the recent flash floods and rapid prevention measures for COVID-19, which took place throughout the month of April.

UNHCR completed a once-off cash distribution for some 11,200 refugees and asylum-seeking families whose livelihoods have been heavily affected by COVID-19 prevention measures in the south. The majority of primary wage-earners in asylum-seeking families who previously worked as daily labourers, in restaurants and in mosques, have lost their jobs following limitations on movement and public gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. UNHCR continues to actively mobilise necessary resources through fundraising to maintain cash distributions to refugees and provide crucial assistance during the mounting health crisis.

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