



PRESS RELEASE

## UNHCR AND IOM JOIN FORCES TO ENHANCE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES FLEEING YEMEN

**Nairobi, 5 October 2015** – Representatives from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) presented the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for the Yemen situation (RRMRP) in a donors meeting held in Nairobi on 05 October. This regional plan amounts to 36 million USD for October to December 2015, and 119 million USD for 2016. The RRMRP is the outcome of an inter-agency planning process that took place in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, following a regional planning workshop held in Djibouti in August 2015. The workshop was jointly facilitated by UNHCR and IOM, working alongside their partners.

Covering the period of October-December 2015, the RRMRP is a plan for the delivery of protection and humanitarian assistance to people fleeing the conflict into countries around Yemen: an estimated 103,000 by the end of 2015. This figure could rise to 202,000 by the end of 2016. The RRMRP also provides preliminary estimates for 2016, including population planning figures and an indicative budget. The 2016 plan will be revised and updated later in the year.

March 2015 marked an escalation of the conflict in Yemen to a war, sparking the flight of Yemenis, refugees (mainly Somalis) as well as third country nationals from the country. To date, close to 70,000 people fleeing the crisis have arrived in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. Up to 44,080 people are reported to have arrived in Saudi Arabia and Oman.

IOM's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York, Mr Ashraf El Nour emphasized the importance of a coordinated and strategic approach in addressing the needs of affected people. *"The needs of individuals coming to Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti are multiple. Refugees and migrants arrive after many hours at sea often traumatized and exhausted, with little or no personal belongings, and in urgent need of food, water, and emergency healthcare. The most pressing response therefore is to address their basic needs and to register and provide documentation to enable access to essential services,"* he said.

Countries around Yemen have shown great solidarity by welcoming people fleeing the crisis. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan have granted prima facie refugee status to Yemenis arriving on their soil, while also allowing people of other nationalities fleeing Yemen to stay. Somalis are now returning, hoping to rebuild their lives in their home country. Saudi Arabia regularized the status of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis. IOM helped some of the irregular Ethiopian migrants who were in Yemen to return to Ethiopia. Likewise, it assisted third country nationals stranded in Yemen to return to their home countries. Generous contributions from various governments and the work of humanitarian actors in the field have made such assistance possible.

In her closing statement, UNHCR's Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Yemen situation, Ms Claire Bourgeois said, *"today, more than ever before, governments, humanitarian, development and other actors have the duty to ensure that people in need are not neglected. They must be able to restore dignity to their lives as efforts are made to find lasting solutions to their plight."*

An interactive Refugee and Migrants Response Plan web portal that provides in-depth information on the situation in Yemen and the resultant outflow of migrants and refugees was launched in September 2015. The portal, (<http://data.unhcr.org/yemen/>) allows public users to access the statistics and situation reports, among other related information, including the final Refugee and Migrants Response Plan. IOM and UNHCR called on the public and media to utilize the portal to keep abreast of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

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*Web portal-RRMRP- Regional Refugee and Migrant Response: <http://data.unhcr.org/yemen/>*