**Forum:** General Assembly 3, SOCHUM

**Issue:** Addressing Humanitarian Needs and Social Stability for Communities Displaced by Natural Disasters in Yemen

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**Introduction**

The number of internally displaced persons in Yemen in 2021 exceeded 4 million as a result of conflict and natural disasters. UNHCR reports that most of these IDPs do not have access to basic needs such as water, shelter, and food. This indicates an urgent and very topical requirement for humanitarian aid. Such conflict does not only compound for several countries but also exacerbates the rising natural calamities like floods and cyclones, and so on, affecting those who have already been disadvantaged. Ten thousand people were displaced by Cyclone Chapala in 2022, while many are left in the lurch of daily routine building efforts facing the wreckages of their villages.

This puts the Arabian Peninsula in an especially vulnerable location for threats such as environmental hazards. On average, almost 28 percent can be said to be subjected to flooding issues every year. Yemen holds an extremely high vulnerability to natural disasters. Further, such catastrophes are worsened during natural disasters by an unstable infrastructure in Yemen that has been unstable due to years of fighting, and shutting down immediate intervention efforts. According to the United Nations, 21.6 million, or greater than two-thirds of Yemen’s population, are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance because of the natural disaster alongside the problems of conflict within Yemen.

The struggle of the displaced communities in Yemen is expected to be further aggravated by climate change. It is expected to add to Yemen’s already critical problems. Degradation in agricultural land due to increasing temperatures and irregular rainfall compels the Yemenis to move out of rural areas to already urban areas. About 80% of the population in Yemen engages in agriculture as the main source of livelihood. This very important source of livelihood is on the brink of environmental degradation. The absence of dependable data and effective supervision complicates the challenges of having appropriate disaster response plants and putting them into action.

All of these issues create further tensions in the Yemeni Government, with the insufficient capacities to restore social stability, especially to those internally displaced communities who tend to struggle the most. The public sector is relatively weak, and rival political groups are found within political systems, which has prevented the long-term solutions to displacement. Therefore, the bridge between these non-profit organizations has been fulfilled, although funding remains a drawback towards sustaining the aid programs. The 2023 Yemen Humanitarian Response plan has had, just 54 % out of the $ 4/3 billion target goal. The drastic gap between the reality and the target goal will have direct effects on displaced families and their critical access to necessary services, including healthcare, shelter, and education for all.

Another aspect that must be taken into consideration is the status of their social stability. Where displaced communities like Yemenis struggle with adjusting to host countries. Increasing the pressure on limited resources like humanitarian aid and land can result in even more conflicts between IDPs and host countries. Without the cohesion between IDPs and their host countries, there is no hope of recovery, and this will lead back to the devastating situation of poverty and more displaced people. Keeping in mind, children and women, who are at higher risk and make up the majority of IDPs. Having struggled with malnutrition, exploitation, and lack of education. Over 2 million Yemeni children are not in school as of now, and that number rises as the displacement increases, further disrupting educational systems, according to UNICEF.

Disregarding the many challenges the Yemeni population is bound to deal with, it is crucial to take action. The environmental concerns, resource scarcity, and political tensions rising, are increasing the difficulty of this conflict. Internally displaced people must be recognized and prioritized as their situation is rapidly escalating to danger. With these efforts, it’s hoped that Yemen can move forward to a brighter and more stable future where stability and live in a prosperous country once again.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Coalition:**

An alliance is formed when two or more countries, political parties, or other organizations coalesce for a particular military, political, or humanitarian purpose. About Yemen, the coalition under Saudi Arabia is initiating support to the Yemeni government against the rebellious forces, but international support for their interference has been quite controversial.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):**

Those people who are forced to flee because of conflict, violence, or natural disasters but who remain within their country’s borders. Unlike refugees, IDPs do not cross any international borders and may be living in temporary shelters or even camps, with high vulnerabilities in shelter, food, and safety.

**Degradation:**

Degradation in agriculture refers to the decrease in quality of production in the land area used for farming and agriculture, caused by natural or human reasons. This can result in the form of loss of soil fertility, crop yields, and impaired ecosystem functions. Mainly known for soil erosion, deforestation, and overgrazing.

**Background Information**

**Historical Context**

The conflicts in Yemen have deeply seeded historical political and social divisions within the country’s state since its inception. Traditionally, there was North and South Yemen, the latter of which was unified through independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and then through Britain in 1967; they became one state in 1990 but remained quite divided, finally leading to a civil war in 1994 between northern and southern leaders.

**Origins of the Crisis**

The reality these Yemenis have to contend with is two-pronged: it is a conflict that is compounded by natural calamities. The foreign threats are both conflict and natural calamities like Cyclone Chapala of 2015, which affected the coastlines of Yemen very hard and caused the displacement of tens of thousands. The catastrophes add more problems to the lives of such communities which were already fragile and had been grappling with war and poverty. These disasters depict the fragility of the infrastructure of Yemen as being mostly destroyed and even more so because it has been in conflict for more than a decade-with such devastation, dislocated people lack shelter, clean water, and healthcare facilities. Most camps will be overcrowded, and provisions may not adequately provide for the basic physical needs of the people, leading to the rampant spread of disease. In the long run, the resources were reduced in quantity, bringing about increased tension among the displaced and the host community and creating social instability. Besides, there are very few disaster response systems in Yemen. Access restrictions in affected areas due to ongoing conflict create difficulty in the process of humanitarian assistance. As it's very uncooperative and aggravates the suffering brought by such circumstances, the scarcity of resources increases tensions between the displaced populations and host communities in displaced communities.

**Impact on Yemenis**

These years of conflict and natural disasters have left devastating impacts on the population of Yemen. The collapse of essential services, added to economic deterioration, has resulted in widespread vulnerabilities; this includes severe food insecurity across eight critical hotspots identified by The World Food Programme and The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Destruction of infrastructure and health care systems has resulted in a rise of vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, while children are exposed to serious risks because of low immunization rates. Floods, drought, and disease outbreaks exacerbate the crisis, while limited humanitarian aid worsens conditions. Despite relative peace, regional instability threatens to undermine efforts to stabilize and rebuild Yemen’s fragile communities.

**Environmental Vulnerabilities**

Yemen faces severe environmental challenges such as rising sea levels, pollution, and water scarcity. The sea level has risen by 3 mm every year since 1993, which is very threatening to the coasts, and cities. And fishing communities; it also threatens to destroy the freshwater used in agriculture and other domestic purposes through salinization. Pollution, mainly from consumption resulting from fossil fuel, oil exploration, and waste, is deteriorating air quality and soil health. Unsatisfactory sanitation systems, especially in urban areas, create the build-up of contaminated wastewater that spreads diseases. Marine resources have also been depleted by overfishing. All these factors, further accelerated by the conflict, worsened living conditions in the county, especially in rural and coastal areas.

**Current Healthcare Systems**

The healthcare system in Yemen is heavily affected by the occurrence of conflicts and natural disasters. As of July 2022, flash floods claiming hundreds of lives displaced more than 31,000 households, adding to the emergency already experienced in the country in terms of health. The Yemeni Red Crescent Society has given much support from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent regarding health issues. Yemen, though it faces extremely difficult circumstances, has managed to keep operating at least 23 healthcare centers successfully across Yemen, providing all essentials including, free primary, secondary, inpatient, and outpatient care. More than 123,060 US dollars have been allocated this year by the Disaster Response Emergency Fund to the IFRC to provide food, hygiene, shelter, and water sanitation services for households very sensitive to the impacts of floods. Continuous support remains essential as Yemen's health and infrastructure remain vulnerable due to unfortunate circumstances.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**United Arab Emirates**

The active involvement of the United Arab Emirates in Yemen has greatly affected humanitarian needs and stability in displaced communities by conflicts and natural disasters in general. The UAE has been preoccupied with military objectives, as it sided with the Southern Transitional Council and local militias, while their activities on these self-interested actions have been primary humanitarian crises. The UAE’s more prominent military and political engagement has further created gaps in governance, which add to the force against the possible establishment of stable institutions that could address the needs of vulnerable communities. Criticism against the Emirati presence has grown as many perceive their policies to accelerate instability and neglect local development.

**United States of America**

The U.S.A.’s involvement in Yemen has been multilayered, through both military and support to the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemeni civil war. Yemen’s collapse into civil war in 2015 expanded U.S. involvement to back the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi forces. That support for arms sales to logistical assistance has been criticized for increasing political instability and humanitarian crises. While the Biden administration proposes to end “offensive” support for Saudi operations, the continuing “defensive” assistance has raised legal and moral questions, reflecting the tension between imperatives and the larger consequences of military action.

**United Nations**

The United Nations has increased calls for joint action on how to resolve the conflict in Yemen, insisting on Security Council unity for bold action. Hans Grundber, the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, called for the fragile situation to be met by all parties with a roadmap for a ceasefire, economic recovery, and inclusive political dialogue. In the face of increasing tensions, regional instability, and a devastating humanitarian crisis that has engulfed over 19.5 million Yemenis, officials say there is a way out that is peaceful. They emphasize that respect for international humanitarian law, consistent funding, and cooperation are necessary for stability and long-term recovery in Yemen.

**Save the Children**

Save the Children is at the very front line of the humanitarian response in Yemen, providing food, water, healthcare, and education to millions of children and families affected by the crisis. Save the Children calls for respect for children’s rights, with a particular emphasis on their specific vulnerabilities during conflict. Through global campaigns and partnerships, Save the Children urges an immediate ceasefire and lasting peace as part of its effort to protect the youth of Yemen and ensure a brighter, more secure future for them.

**The International Committee of the Red Cross**

The International Committee of the Red Cross has been consistently active in Yemen's crisis since 1962, working closely with the Yemen Red Crescent Society. Through the ICRC work, over the years, they have spoken on behalf of the needs of the Yemeni population, bringing more awareness of the continuous armed violence and worsened humanitarian conditions they must face. Providing clean water, healthcare, and relief to the most vulnerable groups of people has been influential. This has concentrated on improving the systems that provide water and sanitation; supporting economic independence, through organizing detainee returns, clearing areas affected by the remnants of war-and generally ensuring vital assistance reaches the people most affected by the Yemeni crisis.

**Timeline of Events**

| **Date** | **Description of Event** |
| --- | --- |
| 22nd May 1990 | When Yemen first became an established country. |
| 19th October 2008 | Deep Depression Flood |
| 16th September 2014 | Beginning of the Yemen Civil War |
| 28th October 2015 | Cyclone Chapala occurred in Mukalla, Yemen |
| 1st February 2024 | UN-Led Humanitarian Response Plan |

**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

* Selected General Assembly Documents, 14 December 1967 (A/RES/2310P (XXII))
* Peace and National; Partnership Agreement (PNPA), 21 September 2014 (S/2014/674)
* Selected Security Council Letters, 8 April 2020 (S/AC.51/2020/1)
* Selected Secretary-General's Reports, 27 August 2021 (S/2021/761)

**Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

**UNHCR’s Humanitarian Efforts in Yemen (2014)**

The UNHCR announced in August 2024 that the humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to grow and has highland partial problems associated with ongoing displacement for people currently within the country. According to the UNHCR, millions of internally displaced people reside in Yemen, including close to 4.5 million people displaced within the country, who are currently experiencing a very serious situation worsened by disastrous floods and poor facilities. Heavy rain, combined with dams bursting open, flooded infrastructure, destroyed shelters, and devastated farmlands, all affected more than 56,000 families. It bears to be noted that even while UNHCR is trying to live up to its pledges for shelter, economic assistance, and durable solutions such as home rehabilitation and social cohesion activities, it is suffering the effects of severe funding inflows, having collected only 21% of its $354 million appeal as of July 2024.

Evaluation: Relief, is only in immediate terms, and has thus been provided to some extent by the UNHCR a few multipurpose and shelter assistance services. Unfortunately, it is insufficient given the gravity of the situation. Continued political instability and lack of means in Yemen hamper this plan. In short, without further and continuous foreign assistance, millions of Yemenis would need immediate assistance as the humanitarian disaster worsens.

**UN-led Humanitarian Response Plan (2019-Present)**

Since 2015, when the war broke out in Yemen, the EU has emerged as the chief international donor of humanitarian response under the Humanitarian Response Plan. The plan is aimed at providing Yemenis through whatever means necessary, including the traditional provision of food, water, health services, shelter, and education, to reach the millions affected by conflict in the country and by highly displaced populations. It has been a vital component of the intervention for more than 18 million people living under extreme humanitarian deprivation, such as through agencies like UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme.

Evaluations: Critical life-saving supplies through HRP are given to millions of Yemenis under its protection, but several challenges have overshadowed its installation. Some of these include very restricted access to sections of the country due to active fighting; humanitarian groups being disrupted, and some very severe underfunding regarding the issue. Therefore, although these efforts are carried out far and wide, they have not fully met the comprehensive needs of Yemen’s humanitarian crisis, and many needs remain unmet. Continuous violence and political install, add to the severity of this response’s long-term impact, increasing the risk of the situation even further.

**Possible Solutions**

**Improving Disaster Response by Strengthening Infrastructure**

Improving disaster response systems in Yemen through early warning systems, emergency shelters, and rapid-response teams allows local communities to take proactive measures for preparedness and recovery response. Training local officials and ensuring a scale-up of access to more effective and timely aid to affected citizens in situations of displacement during these natural disasters.

**Environmental Restoration Projects**

Natural disasters destroy environments that can be built back using reforestation and sustainable water management practices. These contribute to strengthening land resilience against extreme weather and providing room for the displaced to participate in rebuilding their homes and livelihoods thereby benefiting from reduced vulnerability in the future.

**Promotion of Access to Education for Displaced Children**

Calls for action on implementing educational programs in displacement camps for children. Advocating that communities implement volunteer-run schools, utilizing local resource materials and teachers ensure that displaced children receive access to education during this crisis without their lives and futures being sacrificed.

**Resolution on Proactive Disaster Management**

Creating a resolution for prioritizing climate risks, forecasting natural disasters, and adopting strategies that would align with responding to these strategies. Firstly using technological advances for early warning systems, conducting community preparedness programs, and strategic infrastructure development to minimize disaster impacts. Continuous monitoring and quick-response frameworks will be provided to ensure efficient and effective interventions and long-term resilience.

**Guiding Questions**

1. How can the Yemeni government implement education camps for displaced children to improve their access to education?
2. How can Yemen respond efficiently with humanitarian aid to provide essential services like food, shelter, water, and healthcare services, especially in rural areas or areas of conflict?
3. What are long-term resolutions that Yemen can address to improve the current living situation of their citizens?
4. What are possible solutions for neighboring nations to help address the ongoing humanitarian crisis that Yemen is facing?
5. What are various NGOs that can help reduce the pressures on displaced communities, and improve their living situations?

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