



16 July 2014 – Tens of thousands of displaced people are in need of urgent humanitarian aid in Yemen after fleeing fighting between Shia Houthi rebels and an alliance of tribesmen and military units in Amran province, according to government and [local](#) sources.

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen has voiced his alarm at the recent escalation of violence in Amran Governorate which has displaced thousands of families.

There are conflicting reports of the numbers of displaced people, with local authorities in Amran citing 35,000 and relief organizations saying that the actual figure could be twice as high.

Amid a serious deterioration of the security situation in Yemen due to ongoing turmoil in the country's restive northwest, the United Nations Security Council last week [demanded](#) that Al Houthi militants, all armed groups and parties involved in the violence disarm, withdraw and relinquish control of [the city of] Amran.

Houthi rebels did agree to [pull out](#) from the city last Saturday after striking a deal with the defence ministry allowing troops back into Amran.

But according to reports, more than 200 civilians, including women and children, have been killed, and thousands of people had reportedly remained trapped inside the conflict zone in

Amran City, unable to flee the fighting.



“I am deeply worried about the safety and welfare of civilians caught up in the conflict,” United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Johannes Van Der Klaauw, said in a [statement](#) issued in the capital, Sana'a. “All parties to the conflict have a responsibility to make sure that civilians are spared from the fighting and that those who are affected by conflict are able to move to more secure areas.”

Nearly 15 million people in Yemen – over half the population – are in [need of some form of humanitarian aid](#) this year.

“We have a population of more than 25 million Yemenis, of which 14.7 million today is in need of any sort of humanitarian assistance. This is more than [half of the population](#),” Van Der Klaauw said.

Of these, 7.6 million people have been identified as the most needy and for whom the international community developed a \$592 million response plan – which, however, remains woefully underfunded.

Of those in need, 10.5 million Yemenis are food insecure, 13 million have no access to clean water or adequate sanitation, and 8.6 million have no access to health care, including reproductive health services. In addition, over one million children under the age of five are acutely malnourished.

The UN official stressed the need to address the underlying factors of the crisis.

“The real problem in Yemen is not one of a humanitarian nature... but of a developmental nature,” he said, citing factors such as structural underdevelopment, a chronic lack of services, weak governance and the rule of law. “The Government should take ownership of working on these needs... to address the drivers of vulnerability, the underlying factors of this crisis,” he added.

Yemen has been undergoing a political transition, with a Government of National Unity, which came to power in an election in February 2012 following protests that led to the resignation of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

“If we don’t address the humanitarian needs today, the population will lose faith in the [transition process](#)

”, said Mr van Der Klaauw. “If the ordinary Yemeni doesn’t know whether tomorrow he or she will have something to eat... they will lose faith in the transition.”

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