



12 July 2017 – As the war in Yemen grinds on, the increasing battles of attrition are extracting a terrible toll on the country’s women, men and children, senior United Nations officials told the Security Council, calling for concrete action to end the fighting.

“The country is not suffering from a single emergency but a number of complex emergencies,” said Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, noting that more than 20 million across the country are affected, including almost seven million at risk of famine.

Of most concern is the rapid spread of cholera across the country, with at least 300,000 suspected cases and over 1,700 deaths. About 40% of suspected cases and a quarter of deaths were among children aged 15 years or younger, particularly the malnourished. Older adults, pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions had the greatest risk of dying.

Tackling the disease has become even more complicated with Yemen’s health system tethering on the verge of collapse.

“Tens of thousands of healthcare workers have not been paid for many months, more than half of the country’s health facilities have closed and supplies of medicine and medical equipment remain severely limited,” added Mr. Cheikh Ahmed.

His views were echoed by Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen:

“Humanitarians were not as far ahead as they should be in terms of the cholera response, mainly due to the fact that they did not have enough resources.”

Concrete action to end Yemen conflict needed as cholera epidemic spreads

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The UN has received only one-third of the \$2.1 billion it sought to provide food to the millions of people facing famine in Yemen; separately, a \$250 million funding appeal on cholera received only \$47 million.

As a result, aid agencies have faced the hard choice of shifting resources from fighting hunger to cholera.