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Yemen, Food insecurity

The Effects of the Yemeni Civil War: A Humanitarian Crisis

Food insecurity in Yemen has reached a critical point, evolving into one of the most severe humanitarian crises. Years of conflict, economic instability, and insufficient humanitarian aid have pushed millions of Yemenis to the brink of starvation. Understanding the urgent and multifaceted nature of this crisis is essential for comprehending its depth and identifying potential causes.

Yemen, despite being one of the least developed nations in the world, has shown remarkable resilience. Even prior to the civil war, Yemen was already ranked as one of the poorest Arab nations and one of the least developed states in the world. The state of Yemen further deteriorated following the beginning of the Yemeni civil war in 2014. The war rapidly escalated after the Houthi rebels captured the Yemeni capital, Sana'a. The war has resulted in widespread destruction, displacement, and economic degradation as well as crucial infrastructure centers such as schools, hospitals, and markets. These factors have added to the struggles that Yemeni civilians already face, yet they continue to persevere.

As of the year 2024, over $\frac{2}{3}$ of Yemenis are experiencing light to extreme food insecurity. Around half of that $\frac{2}{3}$ figure is on the brink of starvation. Children are proven to be more prone to food scarcity than adults, with around 3 million children suffering from acute malnutrition as of today (Dureab 2019). Malnutrition is severely detrimental to a child's health due to its adverse side effects. Some side effects include a stunt in growth, weight loss, anemia, organ damage, and a weakened immune system. One reason that malnutrition has been rampant in Yemen, especially during the civil war, is due to inadequate access to food due to the destruction of infrastructure (Sower 2021). The destruction caused by the war has destroyed countless local markets and has devastated the methods used to travel to these markets, such as roads, buses, and other forms of transportation (Tandon 2020). Due to the fractured state of the Yemeni Government, Yemen has heavily relied on international and non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian aid across the country. In recent years, several INGOs and NGOs have directed their focus in funding ongoing humanitarian efforts in Yemen by funding the revitalization of Healthcare and Educational institutions in Yemen as well as providing food and improving living conditions in vulnerable areas. Some of the INGOs and NGOs contributing to the humanitarian efforts in Yemen are UNICEF, USAID, EuropeAid, FAO, and the World Bank (Azaki 2015).

The Yemeni civil war has made it more challenging to receive a proper education. Urban warfare has led to the destruction of countless schools in Yemen, limiting access to places of learning for young students. Due to the destruction caused by the conflict, many educational

facilities have been left in ruins or rendered unusable. There are also numerous security concerns regarding children returning to school, such as schools being bombed or shot at. Economic hardships also serve as a limiting factor, with many families unable to afford bare essentials such as school supplies, books, and uniforms. A study in 2019 concluded that 43% of children in Yemen haven't completed primary school and that the probability of even entering school is even lower in Rural areas (Assaad 2019). Due to the economic difficulties caused by the war, existing schools suffered several shortages of resources, such as the lack of teachers, textbooks, and supplies.

Addressing food insecurity in Yemen requires a multifaceted approach due to the complexity of the conflict and the humanitarian crisis. The importance of increasing international humanitarian aid and ensuring it reaches those in need cannot be overstated. Pursuing diplomatic efforts to reach a lasting peace agreement would not only stabilize the region but also enable more effective distribution of aid. Rebuilding and repairing critical infrastructure such as roads, ports, and agricultural facilities can improve food distribution and production capabilities (Shafiq 2022). Providing economic assistance and development programs can boost local economies, create jobs, and reduce poverty, making food more affordable and accessible. Implementing agricultural programs to support local farmers, such as providing seeds, tools, and training in sustainable farming practices, can increase local food production. Improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities is essential for both agriculture and public health, reducing the spread of diseases that can exacerbate malnutrition.

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