

First aid in six months reaches families in western Yemen, 'timelines' slip over Hudaydah ceasefire talks

Thousands of families in conflict-affected communities south of the Red Sea port city of Hudaydah in Yemen have received aid for the first time since last July, the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) said on Tuesday.

Spokesperson Hervé Verhoosel confirmed that Tuhayat and Darayhimi had been reached thanks to a partial ceasefire deal agreed at UN-led talks between Government forces and Houthi opposition militia in the west of the country:

“For the first time since the increase in fighting in Hudaydah in June 2018 WFP managed to assist hard-to-reach areas of Tuhayat and Darahimi,” he said. “This can be thanks to an inconsistent de-escalation over recent days following the December peace talks in Stockholm, Sweden.”

Aid was distributed from Hudaydah – a Houthi stronghold – and Aden, which is controlled by the internationally recognized Government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

“So far WFP has dispatched more than 3,334 metric tonnes of food assistance to these areas, and that is simultaneously from both Aden and Hudaydah,” the WFP spokesperson explained, adding that “8,125 households in Al Tuhayat have received enough assistance for two months and 2,662 families in Al Darayhimi, south of Hudaydah, have received food rations. Those are the first humanitarian shipments delivered since July 2018 when a WFP contracted truck was hit in the area.”

Last month, WFP scaled up the delivery of food and food vouchers to around nine million people in Yemen, up from seven to eight million in November.

The aim in coming weeks is to reach 12 million people to help avert famine in the country, which was already one of the poorest countries in the world before conflict escalated in March 2015.

“We will adapt on a daily basis to the security situation on the ground,” Mr Verhoosel said. “We encourage of course all parties to keep negotiating under the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy. The situation is better already, I mean, we are not exactly at the target, but we are not far away from the target.”

UN monitoring team in Hudaydah continues work, but 'timelines have slipped'

The UN monitoring team which is overseeing the implementation of the Stockholm peace agreement signed by Government and Houthi opposition leaders

last month, is continuing its work, but the warring parties have refused to hold face-to-face meetings in recent days.

UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric [said on Monday](#) that the retired Dutch General, Patrick Cammaert, who is chairing the Redeployment Coordination Committee, has held two joint meetings involving both sides, but “in the last week, due to the inability of the parties to have a joint meeting” he had meet them separately twice, “seeking to find a mutually acceptable way forward for the redeployment of forces from the three ports and critical parts of the city associated with humanitarian facilities, as provided for in phase one in the Stockholm Agreement.”

“While projected timelines have slipped, recent discussions have been constructive”, added Mr Dujarric, briefing reporters at UN Headquarters.

“The chair continues to encourage the parties to resume the joint meetings in order to finalize a mutually agreed redeployment plan. Currently, plans are being discussed on how to facilitate humanitarian operations.”

Hudaydah carries more than 70 per cent of all humanitarian aid and commercial goods into the war-ravaged nation, and future talks towards a lasting peace settlement for Yemen, rely on a ceasefire holding, in line with the agreement made in Sweden.