

## [UN agriculture agency and World Bank launch new initiative to avert famine in Yemen](#)

3 October 2017 – More than half a million vulnerable and food-insecure people in war-torn Yemen will receive immediate relief and long-term sustainable agricultural support, thanks to a \$36 million project launched by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Bank.

“The project will have a [strong humanitarian impact in Yemen](#), as it will provide emergency support and help in building the resilience of the vulnerable Yemeni population,” said Abdessalam Ould Ahmed, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa.

Yemen’s ongoing conflict has left 17 million people facing crisis levels of [acute food insecurity](#). The fighting has also devastated agriculture sector and livelihoods, making the country the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

The grant, supported by the World Bank’s Global Agriculture Food Security Program (GAFSP), will prioritize FAO’s projects to boost productivity, income and nutrition, especially in those most famine-hit regions in the country.

The initiative will also contribute to sustainable agriculture solutions in the long term, according to Salah El-Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative in Yemen.

These solutions include “furthering rural development, providing food security, rehabilitating community water infrastructures and improving capacity development,” he said.

“The implementation of the project will also allow FAO to build on previous projects, such as those empowering women to become more involved in conflict resolution issues,” he added. “Given the ongoing hostilities in Yemen, this project could also contribute to bringing stability to the country.”

To date, FAO has vaccinated over one million livestock and it plans to assist over three million people who are on the brink of starvation.

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## [UN and partners aim to slash 90 per](#)

## cent of cholera deaths by 2030

3 October 2017 – A taskforce of United Nations and international partner agencies is gearing up to launch an ambitious new strategy to combat cholera – aiming to reduce deaths by 90 per cent by 2030, the UN health agency announced today.

“This is [a disease of inequality](#) that affects the poorest and most vulnerable. It is unacceptable that nearly two decades into the 21st century, cholera continues to destroy livelihoods and cripple economies,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

With an estimated 95,000 cholera-related deaths, and another 2.9 million more people affected annually, the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC), a diverse network of more than 50 UN and international agencies, academic institutions and others, will launch tomorrow ‘Ending Cholera: [A Global Roadmap](#) to 2030, which pinpoints endemic ‘hotspots’ where predictable cholera outbreaks occur year after year.

“WHO is proud to be part of this new joint initiative to stop deaths from [cholera](#). This roadmap is the best way we have to bring this to an end,” said Mr. Tedros Adhanom.

Urgent action is needed to protect communities, prevent transmission and control outbreaks.

The ‘Global Roadmap’ aims to align resources, share best practice and strengthen partnerships between affected countries, donors and international agencies. It underscores the need for a coordinated approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks. Through its implementation, up to 20 affected countries could eliminate cholera by 2030.

“Every death from cholera is preventable with the tools available today, including use of the oral cholera vaccine and improved access to basic safe water, sanitation and hygiene as set out in the Roadmap,” underscored the WHO chief.

Although access to water and sanitation is recognized as a UN basic human right, today over two billion people worldwide still lack access to safe water and are potentially at risk of cholera. Weak health systems and low early detection capacity further contribute to the rapid spread of outbreaks.

Cholera disproportionately impacts communities already burdened by conflict, lack of infrastructure, poor health systems, and malnutrition. Protecting these communities before cholera strikes is significantly more cost-effective than continually responding to outbreaks. The introduction of the oral cholera vaccine has been a game-changer in the battle to control cholera – bridging the gap between emergency response and longer-term control.

With two WHO-approved oral cholera vaccines now available, for just \$6 per

person, individuals can be fully vaccinated for up to three years of protection.

The 'Global Roadmap' provides an effective mechanism to synchronize the efforts of countries, donors, and technical partners and underscores the need for a multi-sectoral approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks.

"We must act together. And we must act now," asserted Mr. Tedros.

**AUDIO:** Head of World Health Organization says that every death from cholera was preventable and that the disease takes its greatest toll on the poor and the vulnerable.

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## [HIV-related stigma, discrimination prevent people from accessing health services – UN](#)

3 October 2017 – People living with HIV who experience high levels of stigma are more than twice as likely to delay enrolment into care than people who do not perceive such stigma, a United Nations report released today reveals.

"When people living with, or at risk of, HIV are discriminated against in health-care settings, [they go underground](#)," said Michel Sidibé, the Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), in a press release.

"This seriously undermines our ability to reach people with HIV testing, treatment and prevention services," he added.

When people living with, or at risk of, HIV are discriminated against in health-care settings, they go underground

The report, [Confronting discrimination](#): overcoming HIV-related stigma and discrimination in health-care settings and beyond, gives evidence on how stigma and discrimination is creating barriers to accessing HIV prevention, testing and treatment services and putting lives at risk. It then highlights best practices on confronting stigma and discrimination.

"Stigma and discrimination is an affront to human rights and puts the lives of people living with HIV and key populations in danger," Mr. Sidibé said.

Often, people living with HIV avoid going to clinics for fear of having their status disclosed or of suffering further stigma and discrimination based on

their HIV status.

Related story: [UN hails landmark pricing deal for faster rollout of 'game-changing' HIV treatment](#)

In 19 countries with available data, one in five people living with HIV avoided going to a clinic or hospital because they feared stigma or discrimination related to their HIV status, and one in four people living with HIV have experienced discrimination in health-care settings.

Where programmes have been put in place to respond to stigma and discrimination, access to services for HIV prevention, testing and treatment has improved. In one clinic in Namibia, a shift towards integrated health service delivery led to a 20 per cent reduction in deaths among people with HIV.

The report was launched at the Human Rights Council Social Forum taking place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 4 October under the theme of 'Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics.'

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## [Iraq: UN migration agency assists thousands newly displaced from west Anbar](#)

3 October 2017 – With some 8,500 people displaced over the past two weeks amid Iraq's military operations to retake Anbar province, the United Nations migration agency announced today that it is stepping up provision of life-saving assistance.

"People newly displaced from their homes often arrive dehydrated, suffering from hunger and thirst," said Dr. Hamed Amro, in a [news release](#) while assisting recently internally displaced people (IDPs) in Rutba.

While military operations to retake west Anbar were officially launched on 19 September, many families – often children, women and older people – walk long distances, some for several days, often in intense heat, to reach safe areas.

"Many require psychosocial support and need medical care. Some have chronic illness and exacerbated conditions due to long term lack of care, and others suffer from malnutrition; we have also received a few trauma cases," Dr. Amro stressed.

From early January through 2 October, [IOM's](#) Emergency Tracking has identified a total of 54,546 displaced individuals from west Anbar, particularly from

Ana, Al Ka'im and Ra'ua districts.

An IOM update shows that some 85 per cent of them transited through Kilo 18 screening site and are displaced within Anbar governorate. By district, Falluja hosts 25,300 individuals, Ramadi another 15,100 and Heet 3,100. At the same time, 3,600 sought safety in the Baghdad governorate and 4,400 in the Erbil governorate.

Since January, 32,886 of the total 54,546 IDPs are currently registered in camps, and 21,660 in out-of-camp locations – with 21,132 in private settings and 528 in critical shelter arrangements.

In Anbar, IOM medical staff are providing immediate assistance to nearly 1,000 IDPs per week through four Mobile Medical Teams working in greatest-need locations, including Falluja city, Ameriyat al Fallujah, Heet and Garma. All are identified in cooperation with Anbar Directorate of Health, part of Iraq's Ministry of Health.

In the past two weeks, IOM has worked closely with Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement in distributing 795 non-food item kits, including a plastic cool box and rechargeable fan, to families in Al Habanyah – in addition to 500 kits previously distributed to those not living in camps in Heet. Additional distributions are scheduled for the coming week.

"Life in Al-Ka'im city, under the control of ISIL, was extremely difficult," said Ahmed, who, according to IOM, was displaced with his family of six to Haditha district, Anbar, in a perilous and long journey. "I hired smugglers to help my wife, four children, my mother and myself to escape. They drove us early morning through unpaved roads. Now we are displaced and living in an unfinished building; we have spent all our limited savings and have no money to cover our needs. The supplies we received today will help us get through this difficult time," Ahmed told IOM staff at an aid distribution.

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## **[Dire lack of winter funding puts millions of refugees in Middle East at risk, warns UN agency](#)**

3 October 2017 – Dwindling resources could severely jeopardize efforts to provide refugees and displaced persons across the Middle East with essential winter supplies such as thermal blankets and warm clothing, the United Nations refugee agency has warned.

For many it will be the seventh consecutive winter in displacement, living in tents or in makeshift settlements in near-freezing temperatures.

“We estimate that as many as four million are at extreme risk and need timely and [substantial help to properly prepare for the forthcoming winter](#) [and] of these only one in four are likely to get the assistance they need,” said Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), calling for greater funding for the agency’s response plan to ensure help is provided to all in desperate need.

According to estimates, there are nearly 15 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons across the region, in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

With their needs rising significantly during winter due to the harsh conditions, ensuring sufficient funding for UN agency’s Regional Winter Assistance Plan for 2017/2018 (amounting to \$245 million but only 26 per cent funded) is critical, the spokesperson noted.

“Without proper help, many refugee families end up being pushed further into debt and come under increased pressure to resort to desperate steps to try to make ends meet. Women and children are especially affected,” Mr. Mahecic added.

Throughout this autumn (September-November), UNHCR plans to provide cash assistance, distribute winter items and invest in preparation, insulation and repairs of shelters, as well as improve drainage in the camps.

With sufficient funding, the Regional Plan will ensure basic winter necessities – including blankets, clothing, tarpaulin and fuel – are provided to refugees and displaced persons. It will also assist those living below the poverty line with a special assistance programme.

More than 50 per cent of the assistance package is scheduled to be delivered in cash which would allow refugees and the internally displaced to address their priorities and meet urgent needs.