

# Yemenis struggle to find bare essentials three years on from first Saudi airstrikes

## REPORT

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### *Food price shock adds to war's misery*

People in Yemen are struggling to survive on dirty water and meagre portions of bread three years after a Saudi-led coalition carried out its first airstrike on the country in its war with the Houthis, Oxfam said today.

Families in remote areas of Amran governorate in the north west of the country told Oxfam they could only afford half a bag of wheat a month and had to walk three kilometres two or three times a day to fetch untreated water from a well. Several women told Oxfam they were struggling to make ends meet and had no money for clothes or other supplies after their husbands had been killed in the conflict.

Since the war started the cost of food has rocketed. Rice is up 131 per cent, beans 92 per cent, vegetable oil 86 per cent and flour for making bread up 54 per cent. Over the same period the number of people going hungry increased by 68 per cent to reach almost 18 million people.

Over 3 million people have been forced to flee their homes, more than 5,500 civilians have been killed and 2,000 more have died of cholera in a country where half of the health facilities are no longer functioning because of the conflict.

Colette Fearon, Oxfam's Deputy Humanitarian Director said: "Three years on from the eruption of this conflict, the country is teetering on the brink of famine. Families are facing a daily struggle just to get hold of the bare essentials like food and water.

"Three years of war is more than enough. Too many bombs have been dropped and shells fired, too many people have gone hungry, too many lives have been lost. All sides need to call time on this war. The appointment of a new UN envoy to Yemen is a chance to push for a ceasefire and put the country on the road to a lasting peace."

Despite peace talks in 2016, it appears that parties to the conflict have continued to pursue a military strategy. The appointment last month of Martin Griffiths as the new UN envoy to Yemen, and recent UN Security Council calls for moves towards a ceasefire and to ensure essential goods are given free passage, present an opportunity for the international community to reinvigorate efforts to achieve peace.

Oxfam is working in Amran and eight other governorates, trucking water and providing cash for people there to buy food and has helped over 2.8 million people since July 2015. But the closure of sea and air ports has hampered efforts to get food, water, fuel and medicines to all those who need them. With 22 million people in need of aid across the country, Yemen is already the world's worst humanitarian crisis and the site of the largest cholera outbreak since records began, with over a million suspected cases.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemenis-struggle-find-bare-essentials-three-years-first-saudi-airstrikes>