

Taiz: As Fighting Intensifies, Civilian Lifelines Are at Risk in Yemen

Intensifying fighting across Taiz governorate is disrupting key roads, restricting civilian movement and putting access to food, water, healthcare and humanitarian assistance at risk. Families who have endured years of armed conflict, economic hardship and limited essential services now face further threats to their safety and livelihoods. Since early September, renewed fighting along the west coast has forced large numbers of people to flee, adding to the pressure on displaced families and host communities.

The human cost is already severe. In its 25 September statement, UNICEF reported that, across Yemen, it had verified at least 15 child deaths and 14 children injured since 3 September; another three children were reported missing. These are national figures, rather than a casualty count for Taiz. All parties must protect civilians and ensure that injured people can reach medical care safely and without delay.

In its 7 October update, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported 201,217 people displaced across Yemen since the escalation began in June 2026, with nearly all displaced since 1 September. Its Displacement Tracking Matrix recorded 114,708 people hosted in Taiz governorate, accounting for 57% of the people recorded in this recent wave of displacement. This influx is placing further pressure on host communities and services already struggling to meet existing needs.

Rising prices are making food harder to afford. In a 9 October report, Al Jazeera Arabic cited Taiz's statistics office director, who said potato prices had doubled in four days, from 1,000 to 2,000 Yemeni rials per kilogram, while flour prices rose by 50%, from 38,000 to 57,000 rials. Cooking gas shortages and rising fuel costs add to the burden. For families with little or no income, these increases mean fewer meals and less money for other essentials.

"I can only buy bread that comes to 500 Yemeni Rials, and even that's not enough for all of us," says a mother displaced with four children. "I divide the bread among my children and go without food myself."

Inaccessible roads and insecurity are disrupting the transport of commercial supplies. Local reports indicate shortages of food, cooking gas and fuel, contributing to rising prices and reduced availability in markets. Keeping routes open for essential goods is critical to preventing further deterioration in food security.

Health services are also under pressure. Reports from Taiz indicate critically low stocks of essential medicines, medical supplies and fuel, threatening emergency care, surgery, intensive care, dialysis and neonatal services. Without timely replenishment, patients, injured people, pregnant women and newborns face serious risks. Residents and displaced families also need reliable access to clean water and sanitation to reduce the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases.

Children, older people and people with disabilities face additional barriers to reaching services. Women and girls need continued access to healthcare, safe spaces and protection services, including support for survivors of gender-based violence. Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers need uninterrupted maternal care, adequate food and clean water, including while displaced.

Insecurity and movement constraints are making it harder for humanitarian teams and local partners to reach communities, assess needs and deliver assistance safely. Conditions vary by location and can change rapidly. Restrictions on assessments also leave gaps in information about needs, so available figures may not capture the full scale of the crisis. Safe and sustained access is essential for organisations to respond at the scale required.

We call for urgent action

All parties to the conflict must

- Protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with international humanitarian law, including health facilities and water systems, and take all feasible precautions to minimise civilian harm.
- Ensure safe civilian movement and the regular passage of essential commercial supplies, including food, fuel, medicines and water. Facilitate safe and unimpeded access for principled humanitarian assistance, and prevent delays, diversion or interference with relief supplies and humanitarian personnel.
- Protect life-saving health services by enabling timely deliveries of medicines, medical supplies and fuel, and the safe passage of patients, ambulances and healthcare workers.

Donors and humanitarian organisations must

- Urgently fund and scale up assistance for displaced families, vulnerable residents and host communities, prioritising food security, shelter, healthcare, clean water, sanitation and protection.
- Support emergency health services and integrated health, water and sanitation responses to cholera and acute watery diarrhoea, including essential supplies and support for healthcare workers.
- Provide flexible funding and practical support to local responders, including women-led organisations, so they can reach affected communities and respond to changing needs.

The people of Taiz need routes that remain safe and open for civilians, essential goods and humanitarian assistance. Urgent action to protect these lifelines can prevent further loss of life, worsening hunger and the breakdown of essential services.