

A PEOPLE IN NEED OF HOPE & HELP



More than seven years of war and a deadly economic crisis has had a devastating psychological impact on the Yemeni people. Families and entire communities have exhausted all coping strategies for meeting physical needs, and the traditional safety nets provided by social networks have been expended. As humanitarian aid now begins to evaporate across the country due to lack of funding, relief organizations are prioritizing any resources they do have to provide only the most essential physical support. Meanwhile, a lurking mental health crisis is also claiming Yemeni lives. Hamid¹ owned a small electronics repair shop. He had a good education and was well-respected by his community. The money he made from his shop was enough to provide for his wife, five children, and his mother. Although his financial situation got tighter after Yemen's war began, he could still make ends meet until the day that an electric spark caused a fire in his shop. The fire destroyed everything, and in Yemen's crumbled economy, where commercial insurance is unheard of, he could see no way to recover. Paying rent, buying groceries, and providing for his family's daily necessities became a relentless drain on the few assets he had left. His debts quickly added up, and with hardships for all Yemeni civilians worsening daily, he felt he had nowhere to turn. Despair finally overcame him, and alone in his room one night, Hamid took his own life—adding the bitterness of grief to his family's ongoing battle for survival.

This month, Ramadan has brought Yemeni families a rare respite from the country's violent conflict, which began in 2015, as the warring parties have agreed to a two month cease-fire that was announced to coincide with the start of the Islamic holy month. The pause in fighting has marked the first nationwide truce observed since 2016, and days after it took affect, President Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi - of Yemen's internationally recognized government - also announced that he was handing over his powers to a newly established, eight-member presidential leadership council. "Despite reported violations that we are concerned about, we have seen a significant overall reduction in hostilities and no confirmed reports of air strikes or cross-border attacks," said United Nations' (UN) special envoy Hans Grundberg, 11 days into the ceasefire. "We have also seen badly needed fuel ships coming into the ports of Hodeidah."²

Efforts to secure an extension of the ceasefire are already underway, however, violations in Marib have remained a particular concern, as artillery fire and explosions continued to be heard along a frontline where one of the conflict's most intense campaigns has been waged since 2020. Many Yemenis are not optimistic that the fragile truce and transition of power will lead to meaningful steps towards a lasting peace. Some have suggested that escalations will soon follow, as Houthi authorities in the north use the pause in fighting to redeploy troops for fresh offensives and stockpile the fuel now entering the Hodeidah port. Meanwhile, even under the ceasefire, millions of Yemeni lives remain at risk under a lethal set of economic and humanitarian challenges attributed to the protracted war, Covid-19, and the impact that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is having on global food and

fuel prices. The UN's relief chief - Martin Griffiths - warned that a lack of additional humanitarian funding could undermine any progress towards a final political resolution in Yemen. "There's a serious risk that core programs across sectors, including food aid, water, health care, the support for the displaced, will keep scaling down ... and eventually stop if funds don't arrive," he said. "Allowing the aid operation to collapse would run directly counter to the very positive momentum that I think we are right to honor and celebrate."³

Today, in the midst of Ramadan, as devout Muslims pray, fast, reflect, and seek God's forgiveness for their sins, Yemenis around the country are increasingly in need of hope for this life and the next. At the end of March, 17.4 million people in Yemen were reported to be experiencing acute food insecurity and that number is expected to reach 19 million by the end of the year. Within just three months, 161,000 people are projected to face the catastrophic Phase 5 of the Integrated Phase Classification, in which "starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident." Approximately 2.2 million children under five years of age and 1.3 million pregnant and nursing women are likely to experience wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition.⁴

As Yemeni disciples of Christ celebrate His resurrection this month, they will also continue broadcasting His promises of lasting peace and reconciliation into the looming despair around them through media initiatives. This will include partnering with an international media ministry to produce a live 90-minute radio program called Hot Topics, which is co-hosted by a Yemeni man and woman. This program is reaching women like Rahma, who is a widow living in a remote area of Yemen. "My husband died several years ago, and I live in my parents' home with my three children," Rahma shared, three months after she started listening to Hot Topics. "My family mistreated me, and people scorned me until I was sure I had no value and I just obeyed whatever order I was given like a slave. I lost my self-confidence and my trust in all the people around me and I was only ever happy when I chatted on social media with women who didn't really know me. Once, I was in a group chat and one of these women posted a link and said, 'If you want to know your true value, open this link.' So, I clicked on the link, and the site for your radio program opened. I wondered how there could be Yemeni radio programs about Christian topics, so I decided to listen to find out if there really are Yemeni Christians. When I heard the Yemeni hosts, Sammy and Miriam, talking to each other respectfully and sharing transparently, and how Sammy listened to Miriam respectfully, and how they spoke about the prophets—especially Deborah and Esther, I began to feel that I had value. When Miriam speaks, I can tell she's self-confident, and I hope to gain this same self-confidence. I requested a Bible from the hosts, and they sent me one and followed up with me and answered my questions. A week ago, I opened my heart to trust Christ as my Lord and Savior. Now I have great value, because He paid for me with His blood. Once I understood my worth, I began to say no and to refuse to do things that bothered me or upset me. Each Hot Topics episode gives Christ an opportunity to show you who He is, and I prayed to Him. I was ready to commit suicide, and Christ saved me."

Intercessors around the world are covering Yemen in prayer 24 hours a day, seven days a week during Ramadan 2022 and crying out for Yemenis in crisis like Hamid and Rahma to receive both tangible relief and Christ's message of eternal hope. There is still time to reinforce these frontline prayer warriors during the last 10 days of the month, which have particular importance for observant Muslims.⁵ Visit yemen.pray4movement.org to sign up for 15-minute slots and receive a prayer guide to inform your daily intercession.

HELP SUPPORT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS BY CLICKING ON THE LINK BELOW AND CHOOSING "CAP FUND".

CHRISTIANRESPONSE.ORG/GIVE

1 Names and other details have been changed to protect individuals in Yemen.

2 <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220413-un-envoy-urges-yemen-s-warring-parties-to-uphold-truce>

3 <https://english.news.cn/20220415/df0b6445bb2c4cc683d8d7e7eb11c9c9/c.html>

4 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/USG%20Yemen%20Complex%20Emergency%20Fact%20Sheet%20%236.pdf>

5 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/islam-laylat-qadr-night-power-holiest-night-explained>