

YEMEN'S PHYSICAL CRISIS IS EXPECTED TO WORSEN



Today, out of every 100 people in Yemen, 70 have almost nothing to eat. 66 have no access to health care. 58 are without clean water. 15 are severely malnourished. None have faith in Christ. While new Yemeni disciples of Christ have been reported in unprecedented numbers since the nation's war broke out in 2015, their numbers remain far short of statistical significance in a nation of 30.5 million people facing physical and spiritual desperation.¹

Yemen's physical crisis is expected to worsen in the coming months, due to soaring food and fuel prices stemming from Russia's war in Ukraine as well as underfunded aid programs.² Thus, despite enjoying an unprecedented ceasefire that has led to a significant reduction in civilian casualties, more than 7,000 Yemenis have been driven from their homes over the last two months, according to the United Nations (UN). "Displacement during the truce period was mainly due to people searching for jobs and adequate food," said Ghada Mudawi, a senior official with the UN's humanitarian wing.³

Among the four million Yemenis who have been uprooted over the last seven years of war are Yemeni disciples of Christ—some of whom have experienced serial displacement as targets of faith-based hostility. This includes households like Amin's family from northern Yemen, who recently relocated to a southern city where Amin's three children also enrolled in school for the first time since 2018. Amin and his family had spent more than two years moving from place to place in the north—staying one step ahead of those seeking to do them harm because of their faith—before having spent extensive time abroad to receive medical care. Throughout their years of displacement, Amin and his family continued to encourage other disciples living near them, and also maintained regular contact with others further away to provide remote support. Now they are looking forward to serving alongside other disciples in the south as they continue to live displaced from their ancestral home.

Amin is from a prominent family in northern Yemen, and had been following Christ for many years when Yemeni disciples from the southwest were displaced to the city where he lived in 2015. Together with these newly displaced brothers and sisters, Amin began reaching out to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of Yemenis around them. By 2018, these activities had been noticed by hostile parties, which drove Amin and the others to keep a lower profile. Meanwhile, new outreach activities were gaining momentum in the southwest where the displaced disciples who worked alongside Amin were originally from. Today, new disciples in the southwest continue to live under a siege in the region, which began in 2015. Lifting that siege remains a focal point of negotiations between the warring parties, who have significantly scaled back their violent conflict over the last two-and-a-half months under a recently extended nationwide truce.⁴

Throughout Yemen's war, Yemeni disciples throughout the country have been seeking to prioritize spiritual formation alongside the overall well-being of the body of Christ. The challenges to overcome are especially great for those who are displaced as well as for second generation believers like Amin's children—who have missed nearly four years of school. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index, a child born in Yemen in 2020 will reach only 37 percent of what their lifetime productivity could have been, had they enjoyed complete education and full health.⁵ As our brothers and sisters on the frontlines continue serving faithfully in their unreached homeland through the coming hardships, let us stand with them to hold up their arms and steady their hands for the work before them.

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1 <https://twitter.com/ICRC/status/1527027749700919297>

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TModfPlofVI>

3 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120402>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzL50OR52J4>

5 <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-economic-monitor-spring-2022-clearing-skies-over-yemen>