

AMID THE STORM, HE CARRIES HIS OWN



Throughout July, the explosive remnants of war continued to claim Yemeni lives around the country. At least eight civilians were killed by landmines in Taiz and Hodeidah over the first nine days of July¹ and on July 9th, two Yemeni deminers died and two others were injured by an anti-tank landmine in Saada province. On July 18th, three children from the same family were killed by a mine while playing near Marib's As-Suwayda camp for displaced people² and on July 25th, an arms dealer detonated a projectile he was dismantling in his Marib home, killing him, his wife and five children, and another person.³ For Yemenis who survive such accidental detonations, life is often changed forever for them and their families—as it was for Selwa's household.

Selwa's husband lost both his legs in a landmine explosion, leaving her as the sole breadwinner for the couple, their three sons and two daughters. The family of seven now lives as Internally Displaced People (IDP),

sharing a single room and bathroom that are in disrepair. When Selwa's daughter Sina got sick with a high fever, she didn't know what to do. Only 18 percent of the 20.3 million Yemenis in need of health assistance are being reached⁴—and Selwa had no way to afford medical care for her daughter. When Selwa's neighbor told her she could get free treatment and care for Sina at a local hospital, Selwa was skeptical—but she took Sina to the hospital anyway where she was surprised to find that what her neighbor had said was true. Sina was seen and treated at no charge thanks in part to medicines and medical supplies that have been shipped to Yemen by international partners and delivered to local health facilities.

Selwa and Sina's good fortune that day should not be underestimated, as Yemen's health system has continued to deteriorate through 2022 and 2023. In 2022, only 25.8 percent of the \$398 million USD in humanitarian

aid needed for Yemen's health sector was received, and so far in 2023, just 25.3 percent of the \$392 million USD needed has been received.⁵ In the absence of support from the international community, Yemenis continue providing what assistance they can to those in need around them. In Sana'a, Doctors Abdul Hamid and Adel Saif, brothers displaced from Hodeidah, are providing free care at their clinic two days a week for those who cannot afford to pay.⁶ Meanwhile, in Taiz, where the provincial capital has been under siege for more than 3,000 days,⁷ Yemeni disciples of Christ collected 75,000 Yemeni Riyals (more than \$50 USD) to help pay for medical treatment needed by the mother of a disciple.

Disciples of Christ who live in Taiz city are among the civilians there who have faced a severe lack of food, water, and health care since the beginning of the Houthis' years-long blockade of the city's main roads, including Al-Sitten Street in the north, Hodeidah Road in the west, and Al-Hawban Street in the south and east.⁸ Meanwhile, outside the city, disciples and other civilians in the province face the risk of landmines, which are said to remain in 18 of Taiz's 23 districts, making it the most extensively mined province in Yemen after Hodeidah. Furthermore, throughout July clashes increased in and around the besieged city and officials from Yemen's Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) believe the Houthis are preparing a major offensive to recapture it. On July 31st, IRG troops repelled Houthi forces attacking with mortars and heavy machine guns and firing reconnaissance drones over a 48-hour span in contested areas on the eastern, northeastern, and western edges of the city.⁹ On July

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- 5 <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/11116/summary>
- 6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=496Vkh7vZxo>
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- 9 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2346906/middle-east>
- 10 <https://www.barrons.com/articles/8-civilians-7-soldiers-killed-in-separate-yemen-blasts-b74b006>
- 11 <https://themedialine.org/headlines/houthi-attack-in-yemens-taiz-province-kills-mother-son/>
- 12 <https://english.news.cn/20230704/fd6aa8bc5bdc4bae90f0f1fe137ddcd/c.html>



25th, four IRG soldiers were killed when two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) planted by the Houthis hit vehicles returning from a front near Taiz.¹⁰ On July 15th, Houthi shelling in a Taiz village killed a mother and her son and damaged houses and farms.¹¹ On July 4th, Houthi forces attempted to infiltrate IRG military sites in western Taiz, sparking clashes that killed four Houthi fighters and two IRG soldiers.¹² Previously, in June a Yemeni disciple of Christ living in Taiz was grazed by a bullet from a Houthi military site near his home. Although he did not sustain a serious injury, he did relocate to a village.

However, alongside the unique hardships that disciples of Christ in Taiz are facing, they are also receiving unique encouragement. A mother named Fayrooz shared that she was awake until very late one night, full of care and worry due to her family's situation and her children's needs. Once she finally fell asleep, she heard a voice calling her and she turned to see where the voice was coming from. "I saw a light," she said, "and the voice coming from the light said to me, 'Get up my daughter, and give me your worries.' I responded and said, 'Who are you?' and I heard the answer, 'I am Christ and I've come to carry your worries and give you a blessed life.'"

Fayrooz says that three days after she had this dream, her family's circumstances improved. As international aid for Yemen continues to dwindle, disciples like Fayrooz will continue to turn to prayer and to one another as their hardships increase. Let's pray that Christ will continue to meet them in such personal ways, reassuring them of His love and care.