

# TAIZ INITIAL RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT

December 2011



The political unrest in Yemen has led to the exponential increase of humanitarian needs, particularly with regard to food and non-food items, water, and access to basic health care. Internal displacement constitutes some of the country's primary humanitarian challenges.

Prevailing insecurity continues to hinder humanitarian access. Despite the massive need for assistance, most international and national organizations suspended operations in Taiz because of insecurity and insufficient data regarding humanitarian needs and priorities of affected populations and host communities.

Civilians continue to face threats to their lives and dignity in Taiz. Moreover, many have lost their livelihoods and the access to food, drinking water, and health services. All these factors increase further the vulnerability of men, women, and children.

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An initial assessment of the needs of conflict-affected populations in Taiz was carried out jointly by the Humanitarian Forum and 17 local organizations in December 2011, supported by OCHA as part of a capacity-building exercise for local NGOs. The objective of the assessment was to clarify the actual situation of the affected population in Taiz, in particular their economic conditions, protection, water and sanitation, education and social situation, as well as their basic needs.

Volunteers from 17 local NGOs were briefed in a one day workshop on needs assessments and each received 2 hours coaching and debriefing the following day - no further time was available due to the urgency of carrying out the assessment. Such a short training about international assessment standards and methodology necessarily introduced limitations into the results. Nevertheless, results within shelter/non-food items, education, WASH, and health, aggregated by committed and dedicated local volunteers, show trends,

allow for recommendations and further follow-up.

The assessment teams visited 4 districts in Taiz (see map, page 5):

- Be'r Basha and Al-haseb areas in Al-Modafar;
- Al-Hamashah and Al-Me'kab areas in Al-Ta'iziah;
- Al-Qahirah district; and
- Shamasy and Al-Thowrah, and Al-Mahwa in Salah district.

These areas were selected based on discussions with volunteers leading to the understanding that they were most affected by conflict over preceding months.

Assessment teams conducted over 100 interviews, mostly with individual households. In the context of this assessment, affected persons are defined as those who have been displaced, physically harmed/injured or suffered damage to their housing or property.

According to the assessment teams, there are 834 affected households in the target areas, comprising 3,203 men and 3,469 women (6,672 individuals). While the majority of affected households are headed by men, 17% of the affected households are headed by women or children. Especially for the last group, this raises concerns how the needs of this most vulnerable group can be addressed.

The main issues of concern for many of the affected communities visited include the lack of protection, limited economic means (loss of livelihoods during crisis), lack or limited quality of water and sanitation and subsequent dependence on humanitarian assistance (food and non-food items such as blankets and mattresses), the absence of basic services in many of the areas, and fears for safety and security. See Table 1 for a full breakdown of perceived needs by sector.

From the sample of over 100 assessed households, 48% were found to be displaced and living with relatives, because their

houses had been destroyed or the area was considered unsafe. 37% of the affected families were still living in partially destroyed houses, whereas 15% of the households were considered to be affected but are not displaced or living in destroyed houses.

The primary NFI needs, according to those assessed, included blanket and mattresses. For any response planning, this need would have to be verified. However, due to the limited coping capacity of a crisis affected displaced population means of support in order to respond to humanitarian needs should be identified. This includes considering NFI distributions to a very limited group of most vulnerable persons. Assistance of this nature could lead to greater impact if approached from a livelihoods perspective.

Some interviewees expressed concern at a shortage of safe drinking water. Al Taiziah and Salah districts were found to be the most affected, with only 25% access to safe drinking water.

While 38% of the households are connected to a piped water system, the quality of this water is poor. 53% stated that the water was muddy and 48% mentioned water related health problems.

The lack of health care is due to health facilities being occupied by armed groups, the absence of doctors, and prohibitively high costs associated with health services. Regarding hygiene, the assessment teams concluded that there is a need to raise awareness of good hygiene practices.

Three of the schools in the four districts assessed were found to be occupied by armed groups. Two schools had sustained damage, and another two had furniture and teaching materials looted to an extent that the schools were no longer operational. Another 10 schools in the area surveyed were partially affected (windows and doors broken, and materials stolen or removed from premises).

## II. KEY FINDINGS

- 13% of affected households headed by women; 4% headed by minors.
- 48% of affected households found shelter with relatives; 37% live in partially destroyed accommodation.
- 38% of households connected to a piped water system that is hardly operational with water quality described as “poor” and “muddy”.
- 48% of household described water-related health problems.
- 17 out of 20 schools were partially (10) or severely (7) affected by fighting. Additionally, some schools were occupied by armed groups. Schools which had been burned or looted are in need of replacement furniture and teaching materials.



### III. METHODOLOGY

A meeting between UNOCHA and Humanitarian Forum Yemen took place on 7 December 2011. During this meeting, it was agreed that a joint assessment would take place on 14 of December 2011 in Taiz to assess the consequences of the ongoing conflict, as well as the needs of the affected populations. It was recommended to conduct a qualitative assessment on the current situation of affected populations.

A workshop was subsequently conducted in Taiz with 17 local NGOs. In this workshop 5 assessment teams composed of volunteers from the 17 organizations were formed (each team consisted of 2 male and 2 female volunteers). A Rapid Needs Assessment, prepared by UNOCHA, was explained to the teams, which then selected four locations in the city where it was known that the population was seriously affected. Interviews took place with over 100 households (21 in Al-Modhafar, 35 in Al-Tazia, 32 in Al-Qahirah, and 13 in Salah).

#### Assessment objectives

1. To define the number of affected people in need in the four targeted districts;
2. To identify specific needs of the affected population in the four targeted districts;
3. To assess the needs with regards to basic services in the four targeted districts; and
4. To identify the protection and security issues in the four targeted districts.

### IV. RESULTS

#### Main characteristics of affected households by district

- Estimated total households living in four districts: 34,798.
- Total affected households: 834.
- 6,672 individuals: 3,203 male and 3,469 female (29 breastfeeding or pregnant). Average household size ranges from 7-10 members.
- 83% of households headed by men, 13% female-headed, 4% headed by minors.

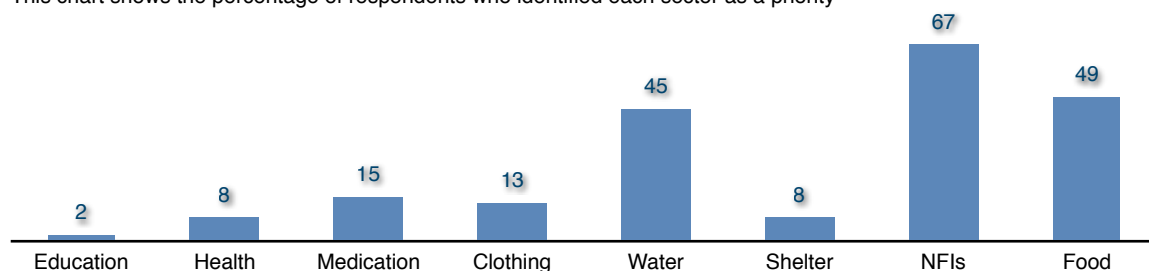
#### Overall findings

For the urgent needs reported by the assessment teams Table 1 shows a breakdown of these needs.

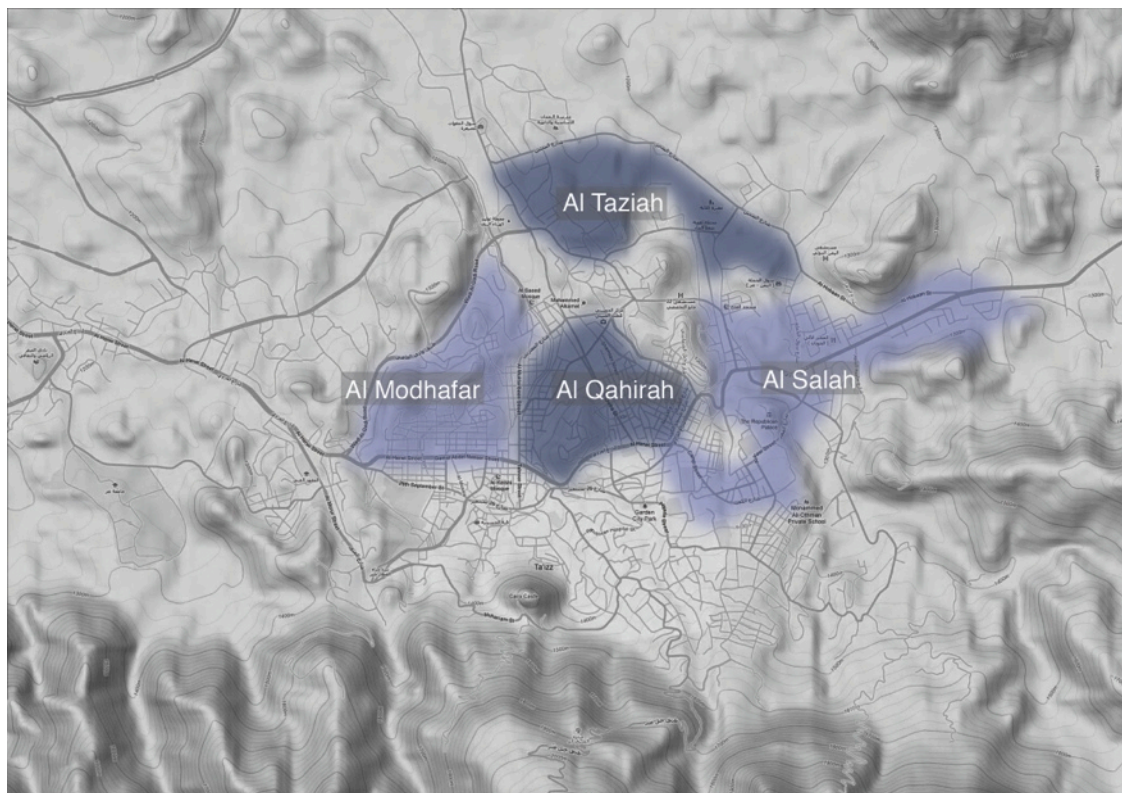
The researchers indicated that the two urgent needs reported by them in the four targeted districts were: blankets and mattresses (67%) and food items (49%) and their justification was that the affected populations were in need of these items because during the crisis they lost their source of incomes and sustained damage to property. Moreover, the host communities are generally poor and the movement of affected people to live with friends and relatives intensified hardships.

**Table 1: Perceived assistance needs by sector**

This chart shows the percentage of respondents who identified each sector as a priority



## V. ASSESSED DISTRICTS



**Table 2: District demographics**

District	Households	Affected HH	Affected individuals	Males	Females	Family size
<b>Be'r Basha and Al-Haseb (Al-Modhafar)</b>	9860	267	2136	1026	1110	7-10
<b>Al-Hamashah and Al-Me'qab (Al-Taziah)</b>	9678	150	1200	576	624	7-10
<b>Al-Qahirah (Al-Qahirah)</b>	8868	392	3136	1505	1631	7-10
<b>Al Shamasy/Al Thowrah/Al Mahwa (Al-Salah)</b>	6392	125	1000	480	520	7-10

## VI. SECTOR FINDINGS

### 1. Health

Before the crisis there was a significant shortage in the health services, this shortage has intensified during the unrest of 2011. During the crisis in the four targeted districts almost 29% of respondents stated that health services were still available. However, people were reluctant to go to health centers because of an absence of doctors, health facilities were occupied by armed forces or armed groups, and due to the high costs associated with health services.

In Al-Modhafar district, 24% said that health services were available, in Al-Taziah district 17% of respondents stated that health services were available, in Al-Qahirah district 41% confirmed the availability of health services, and in Salah district, 38% replied positively about the existence of health services.

Shortage of medicines was the main concern for 62% of interviewees. This need was a result of the difficulty of supplying and transporting medicines, and the absence of service providers and suppliers.

On a sub-question about feeding practices for under-5 children after the crisis, 10% of interviewed mothers indicated they still practice breastfeeding, with 24% saying they use a milk bottle for infant feeding.

### 2. Shelter

Most respondents (48%) from the 101 interviews said they live with their relatives and could not return to their homes because the crisis was not yet over and their homes were situated in areas of unrest. 37% indicated that they were living in destroyed houses because they had no alternative place to go. Due also to losing livelihood, many could not afford alternative accommodation due to prohibitive costs associated with rent or transportation to a more secure location. 15% of respondents remained in their houses.

70% of the interviewees indicated their need to protection from fire. It is common in Yemen for there to be a deficit in fire protection systems. This problem has intensified during this year's unrest. Most of the interviewees described some homes catching fire during armed conflict with no response by the government.

When the unrest broke out in Taiz, most of the affected population left their homes with few clothes. Most people who left their homes and are now living with relatives. Most had had little chance to take any personal possessions, such as blankets, mattresses, or clothing. Poverty among the affected population and the host community (specifically relatives), as well as large family sizes, justifies the urgent need for blankets, mattresses, and food items. Assistance should also be provided to returnees. Moreover, increased prices, loss of livelihoods and income, hinder the affected communities from meeting their own basic needs upon return.

#### Perceptions of shelter needs

- Three quarters of respondents described their protection from the cold as insufficient;
- Nearly two-thirds described their personal and property protection as insufficient; and
- More than two-thirds described their protection from fire as insufficient.

**Table 3: Perceived shelter / NFI needs of affected population**

District name	Shelter	Clothing	Blankets and mattresses	Cooking sets	Cooking fuel	Shelter materials
Al-Modhafar	●	●	●	●	●	●
Al-Taiziah	●	●	●	●	●	●
Al-Qahirah	●	●	●	●	●	●
Salah	●	●	●	●	●	●

● 25-50% ● 50-75% ● 76-100%

### 3. Food and nutrition

After the crisis food shortages was one of the most important concerns raised among interviewees. Regarding the availability of food, 58% of respondents said that there was not enough food for everyone. Many cases indicated that these days the problem is not a lack of food in Taiz, but the inability of 32% of the interviewees to gain access to it because of price increases and reduced incomes due to a loss of livelihoods.

From the perspective of local authorities, two causes were determinants in rising food prices: (1) the increase in the price of fuel, which has both a direct and indirect affect on food prices; (2) the monopolization of the basic foods by the food suppliers with no restrictions by the government.

Another question about what the affected population was using for cooking was answered by 20 % indicating that they use wood. 80% stated that they were using gas bottles or kerosene.

The bread-winner of the family was male for 62% of households, female in 10% of households, and by children in 3% of cases. 25% of households received food supplies from humanitarian organizations, including Al-Islah,

Benna Association, Fajr Al-Amal Foundation, and Islamic relief.

85% of the interviewed affected people answered that food is accessible in markets but they could not purchase enough food due to increasing prices and increasing transportation costs to reach central markets.

#### Perceptions of food availability

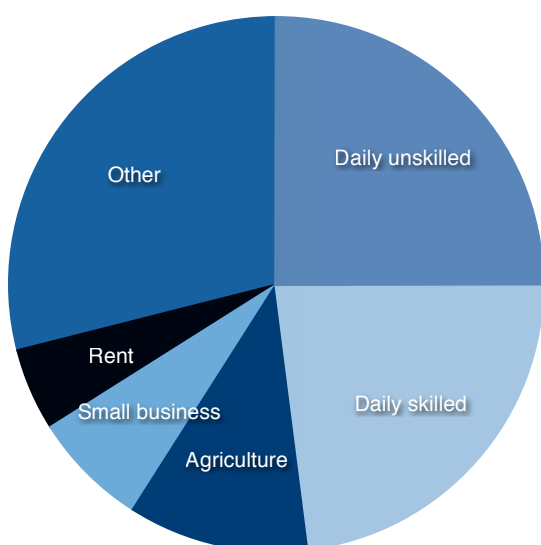
- 73% reported no food stocks;
- 25% reported food stocks of less than one month; and
- 2% reported food stocks of more than one month.

## 4. Livelihoods

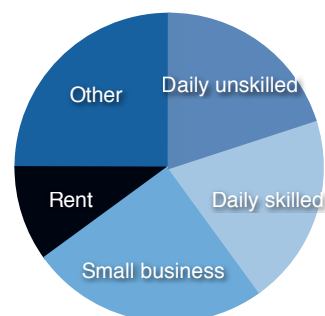
The breakdown of income sources of affected populations reveals that there is a large dependence on daily skilled and unskilled labour, while agriculture plays a limited role in the urban setting of Taiz. 29% of respondents nevertheless indicated that the crisis has negatively affected their crop production (price of fuel for pumps, shortage of water).

While NFI distributions might help to ease the limited coping capacity of a crisis-affected or displaced population, it should be considered if livelihood support programmes would not be more sustainable and have a higher impact to improve the situation of the affected population in Taiz.

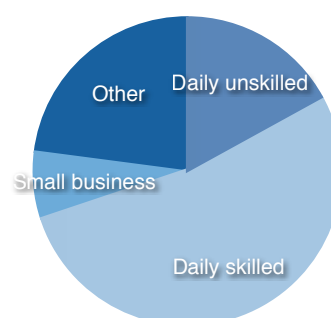
**Overall livelihoods activities**



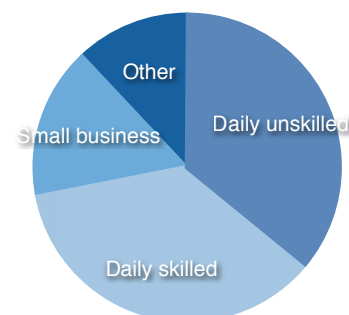
**Al-Modhafar activities**



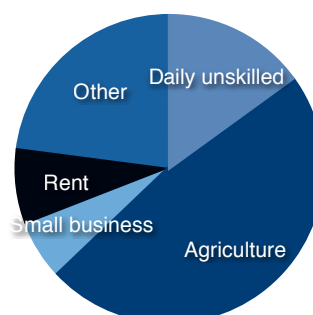
**Salah activities**



**Al-Qahirah activities**



**Al-Taziah activities**





**Table 5: Perceptions of quality and access to water**

District name	Need	Unsafe	Increased prices	Water-related health problems
<b>Al-Modhafar</b>	100%	100%	40%-50%	62%
<b>Al-Taiziah</b>	54%	37%	50%-120%	40%
<b>Al-Qahirah</b>	63%	56%	25%-100%	28%
<b>Salah</b>	100%	8%	20%-50%	92%

## 5. WASH

Taiz suffered water shortages before the crisis. However, this shortage has been intensified during and after the unrest of 2011. According to the results of the assessment, the sources of water are 38% from piped water, 25% from wells owned by the private sector providing water as a charitable act, and 37% from other sources (e.g. purchased from the market).

In another question about the need for safe drinking water 73% of interviewees reported they did not have access to sufficient drinking water. Regarding the quality of water, 53% of respondents indicated that the quality of water was muddy and not safe for drinking. 48% indicated the occurrence of water related health problems, such as diarrhea.

The percentage of access to safe drinking water, according to the majority of respondents, was below 25%. Safe drinking water mainly comes from wells owned by the private sector.

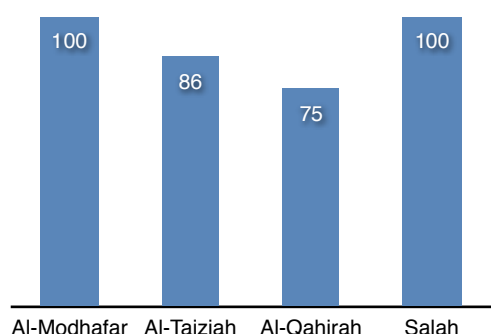
An increase in water prices was also reported. The price increase ranges from 40%-120%, attributed to rising fuel prices and due to the destruction of the water network.

### Availability of hygiene items

Given the poor economic situation and the loss of income for instance from daily paid unskilled labour during the crisis, households were having to make decisions regarding how to spend remaining financial resources. Under these constraints households' first priority is food and shelter (and in many cases money is not even sufficient for these two categories). Hygiene items are ranked of less importance than food and shelter. Under these circumstances many households have not the means for spending on hygiene items. Moreover, there is little awareness on health and hygiene issues, which is why households attach little importance to the topic.

**It is recommended to increase awareness of hygiene issues and consider distributions of hygiene items to displaced populations.**

**Table 7: Access to domestic latrines (%)**



### Sanitation

Access to sanitation facilities: 90% of interviewees indicated that they had a domestic toilet, 10% had to use open fields. The use of open fields for defecation is more common in Al Qahirah district and Al Taiziah district.

On a subsequent question related to the treatment of waste, rubbish, and existence of stagnant water, 31% of the respondents indicated that there is disposal of waste, with 50% confirming the existence of stagnant water.

## 6. Protection

Due to sensitivities involved in assessing protection-related issues using local volunteers, there are some limitations to the interpretation of the data such as over / underreporting of cases and persistently different perceptions / expectations regarding protection issues. A summary of the protection findings, as described by assessment teams is as follows.

*On the question was about the protection's concerns for the affected populations, almost half of the respondents (49%) were concerned about their property, security and safety, 1% talked about their fear of children isolation, 6% were concerned about missing persons.*

*Regarding reported security incidents, 17% indicated that crowded living conditions and the lack of adequate shelter have lead to several theft cases. Also due to the same reasons in addition to the increase of poverty levels, 3% were concerned about the risk of sexual abuse and/or violence. The low percentage of 3% who raise their concerned about this issue is due to the sensitivity of this issue in community and even if it occurred no one will talk about it.*

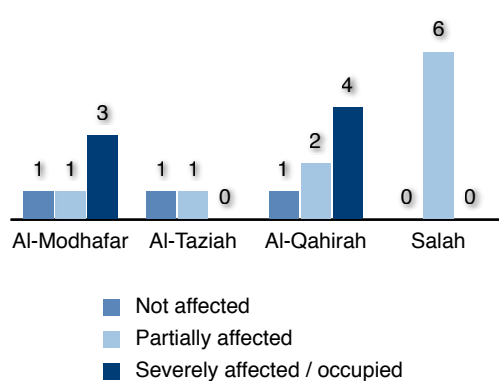
**Table 8: Perceptions of sanitation issues**

District	Prevalence of rubbish	Dysfunctional disposal system
Al-Modhafar	100%	100%
Al-Taiziah	54%	37%
Al-Qahirah	63%	56%
Salah	100%	8%

## 7. Education

To the question whether schools have been destroyed or affected due to the crisis, 50% of interviewees responded that schools had been affected, and 38% said that children were generally not attending school because of ongoing unrest.

**Table 9: Affected schools by district**



### Reasons for not attending school:

- In Al-Modhafar district: 29% said that they do not let their children go to school due to security concerns and 10% answered that it is because of the damage in the schools existed in the areas they live in.
- In Al-Taziah districts 43% of the respondents was that their children don't go to the schools because of the teacher's absence, 3% referred the reason to security concerns, 11% said it's because the crowded in the schools classes.
- In Al-Qahirah district 47% referred the reason to security concerns, 9% said it is because the absence of the teachers, and 3% answered it is because of the long distance between the areas they live in and the schools.
- In Salah district there was no reason given for why children were not attending schools.

**Table 10: Schools affected in recent violence**

District	Names of school	Impact
Al-Modhafar	Saba'a School	Saba'a School: occupied by armed people.
	Al-Wehdah School	Al-Wehdah School: Their furniture and teaching aids has been stolen.
	26 September school	26 September school: Their furniture and teaching aids have been stolen.
	Al-Shaheed Al-Hakimi School	Al-Hajri school partially affected.
Al-Taiziah	Al-Hajri school	
	Al-Noor school	One school partially affected.
	Tariq ben ziad	
Al-Qahirah	7 schools :	Zaid Almosheky school: occupied by an armed group
	Zaid Al-Mosheky School	AL-Nahdah School : Partially affected (very close to the protest's square)
	Al-Nahdah School	
	7 <sup>th</sup> July School	Khadijah :Occupied by armed people
	Alsha'ab School	Ba-katheer : was burned during the armed fight .
	Khadijah School	Al-Sha'ab school were burned during armed fight.
	Bilques School	&th July : partially affected .
Salah	Bakatheer School	
	.	
	Asma'a school	Almost all schools are partially affected
	Al-kwait school	Their furniture and teaching aids have been stolen or windows and doors have been broken
	Al-Khansa School	
	Al-Tholaya school	
	Al-Farouq school	
	Ali Saif Al-Tayar school	

## VII. PENDING ISSUES

Interview health and education service providers and community leaders to:

1. Assess the damage of health and education facilities;
2. The number of students enrolled in the schools before and after the crisis;
3. Identify the full list of schools in the targeted districts; and
4. Assess the situation of the epidemic diseases in affected communities.

## VIII. PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

- Fajr Al-amal Foundation
- Reachout Foundation for Human Development
- Al-Naf'a Charity Foundation
- Al-Mo'taman Foundation
- Al-Tarabot Organization for Development
- CCSSW
- Benna Association for Human Development
- Resalty Foundation for Women Development
- Al-Hekmah Charity Association
- Al-Wehdah Charity Association
- Al-Takafol Association for Social Welfare
- HERTIC
- Al-Ber Charity Association
- Life Maker Foundation
- Benna Foundation for Development
- YWU
- Al-Nebras Health Association

## The Humanitarian Forum Yemen

Phone: +967 1 265 071

Fax: +967 1 265071

[www.humanitarianforum.org](http://www.humanitarianforum.org)