

United Nations Reveals Yemen Is Now the Largest Global Humanitarian Crisis



United Nations, July 29 (RHC)-- In Yemen, the world's worst cholera outbreak is unfolding amid the largest global humanitarian crisis, crippling health, water and sanitation facilities. Three United Nations agencies say the conditions are now ideal for more diseases to spread.

"The country is on the brink of famine, with over 60 per cent of the population not knowing where their next meal will come from," according to the UN Children's Fund, the World Food Program and the World Health Organization.

At the end of a joint visit to the crisis-torn nation, the agencies' chiefs issued a warning that almost two million Yemeni children are acutely malnourished, and "malnutrition makes them more susceptible to cholera; diseases create more malnutrition ...a vicious combination."

They said they had witnessed the scale of the humanitarian crisis, observing that over the last three months, 400,000 cases of suspected cholera and nearly 1,900 associated deaths have been recorded. And they also saw "how vital infrastructure, such as health and water facilities, have been damaged or destroyed."

Despite the risk of disease and the ongoing conflict, some 16,000 volunteers go from house to house, educating families on how to protect themselves from diarrhoea and cholera while doctors, nurses and other health staff work around the clock to save lives. Many of the 30,000 health workers have not been paid for 10 months but they continue to help others.

While the UN officials also offered hope – noting that more than 99 per cent of cholera-infected people with access to health services are surviving and the number of children afflicted with severe acute malnutrition this year was estimated to be 385,000 – they maintained that as thousands fall sick every day, the situation remains dire.

They flagged that nearly 80 per cent of Yemen's children need immediate humanitarian assistance, underlining the importance of sustained efforts to stop the spread of disease.

Drawing attention to their meeting with Yemeni leaders in Aden and Sanaa, the UN officials pressed for humanitarian access to fighting-affected areas and urged all sides to work towards a peaceful political solution.

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