

Over 16 million in war-torn Yemen to go hungry this year



A Yemeni woman sits by the bedside of 10-year-old girl Ahmadia Abdo, who weighs ten kilograms due to acute malnutrition. (Photo: AFP)

United Nations, March 1 (RHC)-- A UN humanitarian agency has warned that more than 16 million people in Yemen would go hungry this year as Saudi war and siege continue to take heavy toll on the impoverished nation.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Sunday that already some half a million people in the war-torn country were living in famine-like conditions. It added that the years-long conflict, economic decline, and institutional collapse created enormous humanitarian needs in all sectors.

The stark warning comes a day before a pledging conference co-hosted by Sweden and Switzerland where the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will appeal for USD 3.85 billion in relief aid for Yemen this year.

The response to the UN appeal is unlikely to meet expectations, given that the coronavirus pandemic and its devastating consequences hit economies around the globe.

Four United Nations agencies earlier this month warned that nearly 2.3 million children under the age of five were projected to suffer from acute malnutrition this year in war-torn Yemen.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO) in a joint statement on February 12 said that of the overall figure, about 400,000 children were expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition and could die if they did not receive urgent treatment.

The UN agencies said that the figures showed an increase in acute malnutrition and in severe acute malnutrition of 16 percent and 22 percent, respectively, compared to 2020.

They further warned that about 1.2 million pregnant or breastfeeding women were also expected to suffer from extreme malnutrition in 2021.

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