

28 March 2025

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release



CHILD MALNUTRITION RISING AGAIN IN YEMEN AFTER 10 YEARS OF WAR

Cases of malnutrition among children are increasing in remote rural districts of Yemen as the country marks 10 years of war, Islamic Relief says. An escalation in bombing, severe cuts to humanitarian aid, and international sanctions, now threaten to make the situation worse and reverse the gains made over the last few years.

Islamic Relief health and nutrition workers say they are seeing increasing numbers of malnourished children, with health centres receiving more patients than they have capacity for and some children dying from hunger. More than 55% of Yemeni children under 5 years old are now reported to be suffering from serious malnourishment.

Tariq Hadi Mohammed, 36, is a doctor at an Islamic Relief supported health centre and therapeutic feeding clinic in the remote Zuhrah district, about 125 miles northwest of Yemen's capital city Sana'a. He says children have died of starvation in the area.

"We are now seeing a rise in malnutrition among children and every day we see more cases arriving at the unit. Malnutrition has become widespread as livelihoods have become more difficult."

"One day villagers found a young girl nearly in a coma from severe malnutrition. They brought her to the health unit, her body was swollen and her condition was critical. We started treatment immediately and she improved. But later her younger sister was brought too... sadly by then it was too late. She was nothing but skin and bones and her body was too weak to recover. She passed away. Seeing her condition made me cry."

"This is a remote area, so healthcare services are scarce and difficult to reach. This unit has capacity for 8,000 people but under the current circumstances we're serving around 12,000, including both local residents and displaced families. We're treating many children but also malnourished pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers."

A decade of war has shattered Yemen's infrastructure and economy and left millions of people unable to find decent livelihoods to support their families. As a result, around 19.5 million people need aid, and 17.1 million people struggle to access sufficient food.

Islamic Relief supports 185 health centres and therapeutic feeding clinics in five governorates across Yemen, which provide free treatment to families who have nowhere else to go. Last year we provided nutritional treatment to over 249,617 vulnerable people.

Hadi Ali Huessien Qadri, a farmer in Zuhrah district, recently brought his malnourished daughter to an Islamic Relief-supported centre, where she recovered after receiving treatment. He says he can't generate enough money from farming to feed and support his family:

“I didn’t have money to look after her and provide enough food for her and her mother. That’s why she got sick. My neighbours’ kids also have malnutrition, and it’s all because they cannot provide enough for their families. They only have one meal a day. It’s the case in the whole village... the situation here is very hard.”

Siddiq Khan, Islamic Relief’s country director in Yemen, said:

“10 years of war has devastated Yemen’s economy, destroyed its infrastructure and severely impeded access to basic services. In this challenging context, we have continued to work tirelessly to reduce suffering, prevent disease outbreaks and deliver aid as transparently and effectively as possible. I am immensely proud of the work the Islamic Relief team is doing in Yemen, supporting 2.56 million people with food, healthcare and other essential aid.

“But while millions of people benefit from humanitarian assistance, millions more are left behind facing hunger, violence and disease. People here desperately need support, but the crisis is largely forgotten by the world. Humanitarian assistance has brought a lot of positive gains over the years, helping people get food, jobs, healthcare, clean water and education. But recent developments mean a lot of these gains are now going backwards again.”

Islamic Relief is calling on the international community to increase humanitarian funding to Yemen, press for a diplomatic resolution to the current escalation, ensure that sanctions do not impact civilians, and support economic development across the country.

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About Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief is an international humanitarian organization founded in 1984 in response to the famine in East Africa. The headquarters of Islamic Relief is located in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Islamic Relief operates in over 40 countries and has assisted more than 145 million people. Today, Islamic Relief Worldwide among one of the largest charity and development organizations in the world.

About Islamic Relief Malaysia

Islamic Relief Malaysia was operated since 2004, which aspires to continue Islamic Relief humanitarian assistance in the Asia-Pacific region. Islamic Relief Malaysia serves as a fundraising and project implementer for international and local projects.

Kindly visit the Islamic Relief Malaysia website, www.islamic-relief.org.my for more information.

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