

# Food for millions in Yemen at risk of rotting in key Red Sea port, warns UN

Desperately needed food aid for millions of Yemenis “is at risk of rotting” in a key Red Sea storage facility because conditions are too unsafe to reach it, UN Special Envoy [Martin Griffiths](#) and UN Emergency relief chief [Mark Lowcock](#) said on Monday

In a [joint statement](#), the top UN officials warned that the urgency of getting to the Red Sea Mills in the key port city of Hudaydah was “growing day by day”, more than five months after aid workers were last able to access it.

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*OCHA chief Lowcock, Yemen Special Envoy Griffiths*

“We emphasize that ensuring access to the mills is a shared responsibility among the parties to the conflict in Yemen. With safe, unfettered and sustained access, the United Nations can make this urgently needed food available to people in need,” said the [OCHA](#) head and Mr. Griffiths, in an appeal to the Government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and Houthi militia, who have been fighting for overall control of the country since early 2015.

With enough food to feed 3.7 million people for a month, the grain stored in the mills could help the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) scale up food assistance to nearly 12 million people across the war-torn country; a 50 per cent increase on 2018.

In December, the WFP reached a record 10 million people. Until now, however, forces affiliated with the Houthi movement, or Ansar Allah, which controls the vital port of Hudaydah, have not allowed the UN to cross front lines to access the mills on the outskirts of the city.

Welcoming the “recent engagement of all sides” in creating the necessary conditions for a UN team to reach the grain stores “without further delay”, the UN senior officials also noted their appreciation for the Houthis’ earlier efforts to re-open the road leading to the mills, despite the “difficult and dangerous circumstances”.

“We acknowledge the confirmation from Ansar Allah of their commitment to implement the Hudaydah Agreement,” they said, referring to the ceasefire deal struck in [Sweden last December](#), between the warring sides.

Chaired by [General Michael Lollesgaard](#), a team of Security Council-mandated UN observers and monitors is trying to negotiate the withdrawal of fighters from the Houthi-held port city, stabilize the fragile ceasefire, and open new

humanitarian corridors.