

Hostilities flare on Yemen's west coast, sparking new displacement – UN refugee agency

15 December 2017 – As hostilities intensify in frontline areas on Yemen's west coast, the United Nations refugee agency said Friday that it is bracing for further displacement and a spike in humanitarian needs.

Following recent fighting in the capital, Sana'a, and neighbouring governorates, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) has received reports of new displacement from Hudaydah and Taiz governorates.

"UNHCR and partners are still assessing the situation, but [initial reports](#) are that more than 1,400 people have fled from Taiz and Hudaydah to the Ash Shamateen district in Southern Taizz, and Al Fayoosh district in Lahj," UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch told reporters on at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

"With numbers expected to rise further, UNHCR is working with partners to be in position to support and help those fleeing," he added.

UNHCR is particularly concerned about the fate of 1,460 Eritrean refugees as well as Yemeni civilians in the Al Khawkah area – 117 kilometres south of Al Hudaydah City.

"The area has been declared a military zone. We are arranging for emergency cash assistance to be sent to this vulnerable community, which is facing difficulties in accessing food due to the hostilities," Mr. Baloch said.

Following days of ground fighting, aerial bombardment and shelling in urban areas, the situation in Sana'a is relatively calm. UNHCR reopened its office there this week, working with partners to resume humanitarian operations that had been halted since early December.

The blockade of Yemen, which has yet to be fully eased, has resulted in scarcities and a spike in prices – including for fuel, water, food and medicines.

While new clearance procedures on goods are also resulting in delays for offloading cargo, UNHCR has asked the authorities to expedite clearances for humanitarian shipments, especially perishables, such as medicines.

Moreover, UNHCR's financial assistance programme, which is intended to benefit more than 17,000 vulnerable displaced families with winter assistance grants, has been postponed due to delays in funds being released from financial service providers.