

Humanitarian Catastrophe: 250,000 Near Death in Yemen

70% of nation's people living with hunger, U.N. says

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Twenty million people in war-torn Yemen are hungry — 70 percent of the population, a 15 percent increase from last year — and for the first time 250,000 are facing “catastrophe,” the U.N. humanitarian chief said Monday.

Mark Lowcock, who recently returned from Yemen, told reporters there has been “a significant, dramatic deterioration” of the humanitarian situation in the country and “it’s alarming.”

He said that for the first time, 250,000 Yemenis are in Phase 5 on the global scale for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition — the severest level, defined as people facing “starvation, death and destitution.”

Lowcock, the U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said those 250,000 Yemenis facing “catastrophe” are overwhelmingly concentrated in four provinces “where the conflict is raging quite intensely” — Taiz, Saada, Hajja and Hodeida.

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