

Crimes against Humanity: ‘No Food, No Medicine, No Money’: Yemeni Town Faces Mass Death by Starvation

By [RT News](#)

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Nearly 19 million Yemenis are in need of humanitarian aid, according to the UN, but the worst of the civilian impact of the two-year civil war in the country has fallen on the district of Tuhayat on the Red Sea coast.

As RT’s Arabic-language crew visited the area, they witnessed scenes of chaos – as locals scrambled to acquire food – and quiet desperation, with many residents swollen with hunger, waiting for outside help, or resigned to their fate.

Salem is an eight-year-old boy, though like many in similar struggling areas around the world, he looks small enough to be mistaken for a toddler.

“We have no energy left, and I have no money with which to treat my child,” says his mother, admitting that the boy is severely malnourished, just one of more than 1.5 million children suffering from the same fate in the country, according to the United Nations.

Fishing used to be the prime source of subsistence for villagers here, prior to the break out of the full-scale civil war between the insurgent Shia Houthis, and the incumbent Sunni government in early 2015.

The area remains under control of the Houthis, but the Saudi-led international coalition, which is supporting the Sunnis, who constitute just under half of the population, has blockaded the coastal areas.

The Saudis have repeatedly fired on fishing boats operated by the locals, saying that some have been used on weapons runs to supply the rebels, even if keeping them moored on land means that innocent civilians will die.

Abdallah and Taga are two brothers, who have become so weak – their skeletons are clearly visible underneath the skin – that they have suffered bone damage, and can now only crawl.

“It is very difficult for us, as we are invalids, and we have no money. Sometimes we get a little, and then we can get tea and bread – people help us, but not very often, and not very much,” says Abdallah.

Over 7,000 people have been killed in the conflict, according to international observers – a large minority of them civilians, who died in airstrikes – and more than 3 million have been displaced.

“The situation is only going to get worse, because there is no functioning government. Social welfare has not been paid for two years,” Baraa Shiban, an activist for the nonprofit Reprieve, told RT.

Shiban believes that the Houthis have to hand back power to the previous Sunni regime, and in return the international coalition must ease its stranglehold on the region, while any other means of help is temporary.

“Humanitarian aid has been delivered to some of these areas, but just depending on it is not a viable solution. We need a comprehensive solution.”

But Jamal Wakeem, professor of history and international relations at the Lebanese University in Beirut, says that the Saudis are purposefully worsening the humanitarian crisis to achieve their political aims.

“This is a conscious strategy of the Saudis, they have been trying to exert economic pressure,” he told RT from Beirut, saying that it equates to “genocide.”

While the Sunnis have more material resources, the Houthi rebels still hold most of the land, and enjoy considerable manpower, so the conflict remains finely balanced. For ordinary Yemenis, regardless of creed, this likely means more instability, hunger and fear.

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