



Press Release

5 years of war in Yemen

In Yemen, civilians are the first victims of an endless war

Ottawa, 18 March 2020. Humanity & Inclusion condemns the extended use of explosive weapons - including the use of landmines, weapons prohibited by the Ottawa Treaty since 1999 - in the 5-year long Yemen war. Explosive violence has devastating and indiscriminate effects on civilians: HI has treated more than 3,000 victims of explosive weapons since 2015 in Yemen, including 850 victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Almost all of them are living with impairments as a result of their injuries and will require specific care for life. The association is also deeply concerned by the multiple obstacles to humanitarian intervention and access to the population caused by unreasonable bureaucratic impediments. HI calls on all concerned parties to lift any obstruction and facilitate timely and safe access to humanitarian assistance and protection to affected populations.

- In 5 years of war, Yemen has been devastated by the use of explosive weapons: the organisation, Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) reports that **nearly 16,300 people have been killed or injured by explosive weapons** between 2015 and 2018. **About 80% of them were civilians**. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas in Yemen, AOAV has found that, 95% of casualties were civilians.
- There are reports of widespread use of landmines in several regions of the country. Landmines and various explosive ordnances are now present in 19 out of 22 governorates throughout Yemen putting millions of civilians at risk (OCHA, 2019).
- The massive and repeated use of explosive weapons in populated areas - especially those with wide area effects - has exacerbated Yemen's humanitarian crisis and will have a long-term impact in Yemen. According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview, up to **600 civilian infrastructures were destroyed or damaged per month in 2018**. **80% of the population needs humanitarian aid to survive**. **In Yemen**, 50% of medical facilities no longer function while **19.7 million people in need of healthcare** and **17.8 people lack access to safe water** and sanitation. The economic blockade and disruption to the economy have inflated the cost of food and fuel. **3.3 million people are displaced**.
- The level of contamination by explosive remnants of war in Yemen is likely to be extremely high due to the intensity of the conflict over the last 5 years. Should the conflict end today, incidents linked with the use of weapons are expected to last for decades and continue to impact civilians and prevent the return of the displaced to their homes.

- HI is present in the governorates of Sana'a, Amanat al Asimah and Aden, in 6 health centres, and welcomes patients from all over the country. HI has treated **25,000 people, many of them victims of the conflict**, since the beginning of its operations in 2015. **More than 3,000 of them are victims of explosive weapons** (bombings, explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices...).
- Among its beneficiaries, HI notes a large and unprecedented proportion of victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war in Yemen: **850 victims of these weapons** have been taken care of by the association in 5 years.
- The association has provided **more than 27,000 crutches, walkers, wheelchairs etc. Nearly 23,000 people have received psychological support**. HI fitted **300 people with prostheses and orthotics** through its collaboration with the Sana'a Physiotherapy and Prosthesis Centre. **More than 700 Yemeni health workers** in Sana'a and other governorates were sensitized and trained in early trauma response.
- HI has contributed to set up emergency rehabilitation for war wounded in Yemen to meet the specific needs of the victims: landmines cause amputations of lower limbs. The victims of bombing have complex injuries (open wounds, fractures, burns, loss of muscle mass, damaged nervous systems, etc.). Without rehabilitation immediately following surgery, patients risk serious loss of mobility, resulting in impairments that often go hand in hand with social and professional marginalization, a reduction in income and the impoverishment of the patient's family.
- **Thomas Hugonnier, Director of Middle East Operations at HI:** "5 years of armed conflict led to a complex crisis with devastating effects. The armed violence has destroyed the country's economic circuits making Yemen the world's largest humanitarian emergency: 80% of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. NGOs face significant security and administrative constraints that considerably reduce their scope of action. It is essential to ensure that the affected population have a safe and timely access to basic services. States' Donors should renew their support to the lifesaving humanitarian aid in Yemen and continue to put pressure on parties to the conflict to lift the obstacles that impede humanitarian access and intervention."
- **Thomas Hugonnier, Director of Middle-East Operations at HI:** "In the hospitals and rehabilitation centres where we operate, we are stricken by the number of people injured by bombing, landmines or unexploded ordnance. For many of them, physical rehabilitation is an absolute necessity. Many wounded people will need long-term medical, financial and social support, often for the rest of their lives... The devastating legacy of this conflict will leave for a whole generation of people with injuries and disabilities and will require the support of aid agencies for many years."

Diplomatic process to end bombing in urban areas

- HI and members of the International Network of Explosive Weapons (INEW) are working with States to develop a strong political declaration **to end the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas and to ensure support to the victims of these weapons**.

- Negotiations for a political declaration to end the human suffering caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas started in Vienna on October 1-2, 2019. Two rounds of negotiations took place in Geneva on November 2019 and February 2020 and will be followed by another round of consultations later in 2020. This diplomatic process will be finalised with **a political declaration that will be opened for endorsement.**
- **HI calls for citizens' support to mobilize parliamentarians in 7 countries** (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and United Kingdom) **and ensure that governments will commit to the cause:** Citizens are invited to sign [the international petition](#) to ask their government to support the declaration against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

About Humanity & Inclusion

HI is an independent international aid organisation. It has been working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster for 30 years. Working alongside people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our actions and voice are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions and promoting respect for their dignity and basic rights. Since it was founded in 1982, Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International) has set up development programmes in more than 60 countries and intervenes in numerous emergency situations. There are eight national associations within the network (Germany, Belgium, Canada, United States, France, Luxembourg, UK and Switzerland), working tirelessly to mobilise resources, co-manage projects and increase the impact of the organisation's principles and actions. HI is one of six founding organisations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-recipient of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize and winner of the Conrad N. Hilton Award in 2011. HI takes action and campaigns in places where "living in dignity" is no easy task."

More information sur www.hi.-canada.org

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