

UN says Yemen war deaths will reach 377,000 by end of the year



UN development agency report projects that 60 percent of deaths would have been the result of indirect causes [File: Naif Rahma/Reuters]

United Nations, November 24 (RHC)-- A new United Nations report has projected that the death toll from Yemen's war will reach 377,000 by the end of 2021, including those killed as a result of indirect and direct causes.

In a report published on Tuesday, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated that 70 percent of those killed would be children under the age of five. It found that 60 percent of deaths would have been the result of indirect causes, such as hunger and preventable diseases, with the remainder a result of direct causes like front-line combat and air raids.

"In the case of Yemen, we believe that the number of people who have actually died as a consequence on conflict exceeds the numbers who died in battlefield," UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said.

Yemen has been mired in conflict since 2014, when the Houthi rebel movement seized much of the northern part of the country, including the capital, Sanaa, as the government fled. In March 2015, a coalition of Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia intervened in the war with the aim of restoring the government.

The conflict has been deadlocked for years, with Yemen teetering at the brink of a famine, and tens of thousands of people killed. The situation in the country has been described by the UN as the world's worst humanitarian disaster. At least 15.6 million people are living in extreme poverty.

The report projected grim outcomes in the near future should the conflict drag on. It said some 1.3 million people would die by 2030, and that 70 percent of those deaths would be the result of indirect causes such as loss of livelihoods, rising food prices, and the deterioration of basic services such as health and education.

The report also found that the number of those experiencing malnutrition would surge to 9.2 million by 2030, and the number of people living in extreme poverty would reach 22 million, or 65 percent of the population.

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