

OXFAM says catastrophe awaits Yemen unless truce renewed



London, June 1 (RHC)-- The international charity group OXFAM warns that the people of Yemen could face “catastrophic hunger” unless a rare truce that has been brokered by the UN between the warring sides in the country is renewed.

The body sounded the alarm on Tuesday, a day before the United Nations-mediated ceasefire is expected to run out. The truce, it noted on its website, “has brought a drop in civilian casualties as airstrikes and ground fighting have significantly reduced.”

A Saudi Arabia-led coalition began unleashing a huge, deadly and indiscriminate war on the Arab world’s already poorest nation in March 2015. The aggressors have been seeking to restore power in Yemen to the country’s former Saudi- and Western-allied officials. The military campaign has fallen short of the goal, while killing hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and turning the entire country into the site of, what the UN has called, the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

As part of its efforts to bring the country to its knees, the invading coalition has imposed an all-out siege on the nation, including by forcing a complete lockdown on the airport and the port city, which serves as Yemen's lifeline contact points with the outside world.

OXFAM's report said as a result of the truce "flights out of [the Yemeni capital] Sana'a airport have recommenced and fuel ships have been able to enter Hodaydah port..." said the group.

The charity's Yemen director, Ferran Puig, said the truce had brought a "long overdue sense of hope that we can break the cycle of violence and suffering in Yemen."

"The opportunity must be seized to extend the truce and push for a lasting peace if we are to avert the risk of millions of Yemenis being forced into acute hunger," Puig said.

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