

UN says Yemen's humanitarian crisis growing as economy collapses

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A woman cooks inside a tent at a temporary camp for people displaced by the conflict, which has been inundated after heavy rains, in Yemen's southwestern province of Taiz [File: Ahmad Al-Bash/AFP]

United Nations, October 15 (RHC)-- Yemen's economy is collapsing, its humanitarian crisis is worsening, and the conflict in the Arab world's poorest nation is growing more violent, the United Nations' deputy humanitarian chief has said.

The grim remarks by Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham came during a briefing to the UN Security Council on Thursday. More than 20 million Yemenis – two-thirds of the population – need humanitarian assistance, but aid agencies, he said, “are, once again, starting to run out of money.”

Aid agencies are now helping nearly 13 million people across the country, about 3 million more than just a few months ago, Rajasingham added. “Our best assessment is that this expansion has considerably pushed back the immediate risk of large-scale famine.”

But he warned that aid agencies don't have enough money to keep going at this scale and “in the coming weeks and months, up to 4 million people could see their food aid reduced” and “by the end of the year, that number could rise to 5 million people.”

“We are calling on everyone to do everything possible to sustain the momentum we've built over the last several months and keep famine at bay,” Rajasingham said.

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