

BRIEFING PAPER • YEMEN

Taiz Under Siege

The Economic and Humanitarian
Impact of Road Closures



Taiz Under Siege: The Economic and Humanitarian Impact of Road Closures

Second Briefing

Taiz Governorate | October 2026

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Key Findings of the Briefing

- The city of Taiz is facing near-total isolation from food, medicine, and energy supplies. Within five days, the city lost its main supply route for goods and commodities: Taiz–Al-Turbah–Lahj–Aden, following the Houthi group’s takeover of areas west and south of Taiz. Meanwhile, government authorities, in Taiz, closed the eastern route used for civilian movement to Al-Hawban area on security grounds. As of October 9, no regular commercial corridor had been reopened.
- Petroleum products have disappeared from fuel stations, and a black market has emerged, with a 20-liter container of gasoline selling for approximately YER 100,000, equivalent to more than US\$65. Household LPG has disappeared from most sales outlets, while white flour is no longer available in shops, and wheat is being sold by the kilogram.
- Wheat and flour stocks in the remaining government-controlled districts are estimated to cover approximately 19 days of consumption, according to the official emergency plan. This represents a narrow buffer if food supplies to the city are not resumed.
- Water supplies to the city have been disrupted, particularly following the suspension of 65,000 liters of diesel that the local Water Corporation received monthly through the UNOPS. According to a local official source, this volume accounted for approximately 72% of the corporation’s operational fuel requirements.
- Displacement into Taiz Governorate has intensified. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded more than 114,000 displaced people in the governorate as of October 7, accounting for 57% of all people displaced across Yemen since the latest fighting began. Most are concentrated in Al-Ma’afer, Jabal Habashi, and other districts cut off from supplies, including the city’s three urban districts.
- **Urgent Priority:** Reopen the main Taiz–Aden route via Al-Turbah city to allow the passage of essential goods and fuel, and restore diesel supplies to water and health facilities.

1. Introduction

This briefing, the second in a series issued by the Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC) since the latest military developments in Taiz Governorate began, last August, comes at a time when Taiz city has shifted from a prolonged partial siege to near-total isolation from commercial supply routes. During the first week of October 2026, the city lost its two remaining land access routes. The main route for goods and commodities: Taiz–Al-Turbah–Lahj–Aden, was cut off following the Houthis group’s takeover of areas west and south of Taiz.¹ Meanwhile, local authorities, in Taiz, closed the eastern route leading to Al-Hawban area, which is used exclusively for civilian movement, on security grounds.² The Taiz–Al-Turbah–Lahj–Aden road, which has served as the main artery for the entry of goods since 2016, was cut off at Al-Safiyah area in Al-Turbah. This came weeks after the coastal Mocha route, which facilitates the transport of LPG and food supplies to the city, had already been disrupted.³

The effects of this shift quickly became apparent in local markets. According to field accounts collected by the SEMC’s team during the first week of October, gasoline disappeared from fuel stations and became available only on the black market; household LPG vanished from most sales outlets; and white flour became unavailable in most shops. Some retailers resorted to selling wheat in bags weighing as little as one kg.⁴ These indicators suggest that the crisis is no longer merely a matter of rising prices; it has become a crisis of access to essential goods, with supply chains for basic commodities brought to a complete halt.

This briefing focuses on developments since the last remaining access routes were cut off. It draws on three complementary sources: direct field accounts from traders, workers at fuel and cooking gas stations, and residents inside the city; an official letter dated October 8, 2026, sent by the Governor of Taiz to the UN Humanitarian

¹ Agence France-Presse (AFP), citing security sources and three military sources, as reported by *Middle East Eye*, “Houthis cut vital supply road to Yemen’s Taiz,” October 4, 2026.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/houthis-cut-vital-supply-road-yemens-taiz>

² Al Jazeera Net, “Taiz’s Lifeline: Yemeni Government Plans to Close a Vital Crossing for ‘Security Reasons,’” October 2, 2026, citing Ammar Al-Samie, military media official at the eastern crossing.

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2026/10/2/أمنية-لحوا-منفذ-حيوي-لادعاء-أمنية>

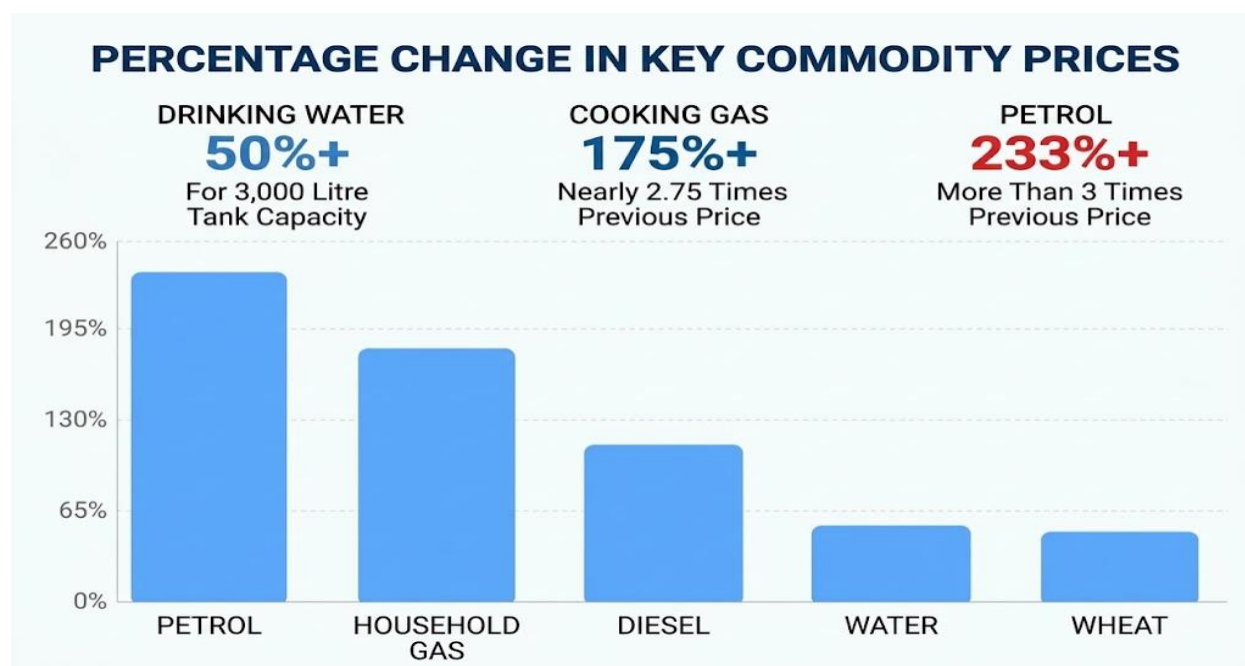
³ Al Jazeera Net, “When War Closes the Road: Taiz’s Crossings That Do Not Appear on the Map,” September 21, 2026. <https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2026/9/21/لا-التي-تغز-معاير-التي-لا-تظهر-على-الخريطة>

⁴ Field accounts and interviews conducted by the SEMC team with food, grain, and vegetable traders; retailers; fuel and LPG station workers; and residents of Taiz city during the first week of October 2026. These are unpublished primary sources, and the identities of the sources have been withheld.

Coordinator in Yemen, together with its statistical annexes;⁵ and the latest data from the IOM, the WFP, and the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen. Throughout the briefing, a distinction is made between information corroborated by multiple sources and the SEMC’s own analysis of the situation and its implications.

Key Economic and Humanitarian Indicators

Siege and Population: Taiz city has been under an effective siege since October 4, 2026, following the cutoff of its main road to Aden, after the Mocha route had already been disrupted and the eastern crossing closed. The population of the city and the surrounding besieged areas is estimated at approximately 1.5 million people.



Food Security: Recorded wheat and flour stocks stand at 20,000 metric tons, sufficient to cover approximately 19 days of estimated consumption in government-controlled districts across Taiz Governorate, not the city alone. White flour was found to be unavailable in most of the shops covered by field monitoring.

Water and Essential Services: Monthly diesel supplies of 65,000 liters to the City’s local Water Corporation have been suspended. These supplies account for an

⁵ Nabil Shamsan, Governor of Taiz, letter to Laurent Bakira, Acting Resident Representative and UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, entitled “The Critical Humanitarian Situation in Taiz Governorate Due to the Siege and Its Immediate Consequences,” outgoing reference No. 1067, dated October 8, 2026. Unpublished official document reviewed by the SEMC.

estimated 72% of its operational fuel requirements, threatening the continuity of water pumping and other essential services.

Displacement and Aid: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded 114,708 displaced people in Taiz Governorate as of October 7, while the delivery of World Food Programme (WFP) assistance to approximately 350,000 people in parts of Taiz and Al Hudaydah has been disrupted.

2. Background on Taiz City and Its Economic and Geographic Significance

Taiz city is located in southwestern Yemen and is administratively divided into three urban districts: Al-Mudhaffar, Al-Qahirah, and Salh. Its built-up area is estimated by UN-Habitat at approximately 22 square kilometers. Historically, the city has served as a transportation hub linking the Red Sea port of Mocha to Aden in the south and Ibb and Sana'a to the north. Before the war, it was a thriving commercial center and an emerging industrial hub dating back to the 1970s.⁶ This location is the source of both its economic importance and its vulnerability: a city that produces little of its own food and fuel depends on the uninterrupted operation of roads connecting it to ports and production areas.

No recent, reliable estimate is available for the population of Taiz city alone. The last general census, conducted in 2004, recorded approximately 466,968 residents. The UN 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan estimated the combined population of the city's three urban districts at approximately 373,000, around 165,000 in Al-Mudhaffar, 120,000 in Al-Qahirah, and more than 85,000 in Salh, following the displacement of a substantial portion of the city's population during the early years of the war.⁷ However, these estimates predate successive waves of displacement into the city and do not reflect its current population.

The SEMC estimates that Taiz city and the surrounding besieged districts have a combined population of approximately 1.5 million, out of an estimated 4.5 million people across Taiz Governorate.⁸

⁶ UN-Habitat, *Taiz City Profile*, November 2020, pp. 7 and 14–15. Population estimates are based on data from the Central Statistical Organization and the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan.

https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/11/taiz_city_profile.pdf

⁷ UN-Habitat, *Taiz City Profile*, 2020, cited above.

⁸ Al Jazeera English, "Why is fighting intensifying in Yemen's Taiz governorate?" October 4, 2026.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/4/why-is-fighting-intensifying-in-yemens-taiz-governorate>

The city has been under siege since 2015, with its northern, eastern, and western approaches cut off. The siege was partially broken in August 2016 along the southwestern route. Since then, the Al-Dhabab road, extending toward Al-Turbah, Hajat Al-Abd, Lahj, and Aden, has remained the city's main supply artery for goods, despite its length, difficult terrain, and repeated exposure to clashes.⁹

On June 13, 2024, the Houthi group unilaterally reopened Al-Qasr Road, the eastern crossing connecting the city center to Al-Hawban area, without a political or security agreement. This reduced travel time between the two sides of the city from approximately six hours to less than 30 minutes. However, the route remained restricted to light vehicles during daylight hours and was never officially opened to commercial freight. Proposals to open other roads to allow trucks to pass also went unanswered.¹⁰ In addition to these two routes, the Mocha road via Al-Kadahah provided an alternative corridor for transporting cooking gas and food supplies into the city.¹¹

3. Developments: From a Partial Siege to the Closure of the Last Remaining Supply Route

Clashes between Yemen's IRG forces and Houthi forces in Taiz Governorate have intensified since August 2026, expanding in late August across the governorate's western rural areas. According to local authorities, 65,845 people were displaced between August 10 and September 15, approximately 95% of whom came from five districts that witnessed the heaviest fighting: Jabal Habashi, Al-Ma'afer, Maqbanah, Al-Wazi'iyah, and Mawza.¹² Following the Houthis' takeover of the western coast, including the city of Mocha, during the first half of September,¹³ the Mocha-Taiz route via Al-Kadahah was disrupted.

⁹ Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, "Opening the Road to Besieged Taiz City: Easing Travel vs. Continued Hardship," *Yemen Review*, July–September 2024. <https://sanaacenter.org/the-yemen-review/july-sept-2024/23529>

¹⁰ Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 2024, cited above.

¹¹ Al Jazeera Net, September 21, 2026, cited above.

¹² Al Jazeera English, "Taiz camps overflow with Yemenis fleeing fighting after Houthi offensive," September 16, 2026, citing local Taiz authorities. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/9/16/taiz-camps-overflow-with-yemenis-fleeing-fighting-after-houthi-offensive>

¹³ Al Jazeera English, October 4, 2026, cited above.

The southern route through Al-Turbah, Tur Al-Bahah, and Hajat Al-Abd consequently became the main available corridor, despite being damaged and not fully suitable for truck and heavy freight traffic.¹⁴

The eastern crossing came under repeated attacks throughout September. The most notable incident occurred on September 13, when three armored vehicles reportedly attempted to infiltrate the crossing by exploiting civilian congestion, resulting in deaths and injuries, according to the crossing's military media official. Citing "security and military developments around the city," government authorities announced that the crossing would be closed effective October 3 "until further notice."¹⁵

The following day, October 4, Houthi forces took control of Al-Safiyah near Al-Turbah, cutting the main road between Taiz and Aden, according to security and military sources who spoke to Agence France-Presse (AFP). The sources said this effectively placed the city under siege.¹⁶ Erem News quoted local sources as reporting that Houthi forces entered Al-Turbah on the same day, after government forces withdrew to the surrounding highlands, while clashes continued in the area.¹⁷ The Houthi group subsequently consolidated its control over Al-Shamayatayn District, including Al-Turbah and other nearby villages and areas.

What has changed? Until late September, following the loss of the Mocha route, the city relied on a single main commercial supply corridor through Al-Turbah and Hajat Al-Abd, alongside an eastern crossing used by individuals and light cargo. Since October 4, both routes have been lost. The only remaining options are difficult detour routes that, at best, can accommodate light vehicles, with risks heightened by continued clashes along these roads.

4. Road Closures and Their Economic Impact on Taiz City

Markets in Taiz city depend almost entirely on goods supplied from outside the city. According to the Taiz Office of Industry and Trade, two structural factors that predate the latest escalation compound this vulnerability: the absence of large strategic

¹⁴ Al Jazeera Net, September 21, 2026, cited above.

¹⁵ Al Jazeera Net, October 2, 2026, cited above.

¹⁶ Agence France-Presse (AFP), October 4, 2026, cited above.

¹⁷ Erem News, "Yemen: Houthis Take Control of Al-Turbah as Fighting Intensifies on the Taiz City Front," citing local sources. The publication date is not displayed on the webpage; the reported events occurred on Sunday, October 4, 2026. <https://www.eremnews.com/news/arab-world/pa1ahz7>

warehouses in the city and the absence of major importers and wholesalers, driven out by the siege and the war. The Office identifies a third, financial constraint: commercial banks' refusal to accept cash deposits from major traders and residents. It says this has adversely affected the supply of essential goods to the governorate and led to a "marked" decline in stocks accumulated in previous periods.¹⁸ Against this backdrop, road closures are causing not only price increases but also shortages and market disruption.

A. Disruption of Commodity Supply Chains

The closure of the Taiz–Al-Turbah road and the eastern crossing disrupted the two channels through which local markets had been replenished. The first supplied imported goods, fuel, and LPG from Aden and Lahj; the second carried shipments of vegetables and fruit from Al-Hawban and other governorates. According to traders' accounts, access to their usual suppliers has become more difficult, transport costs have risen, and shops have been unable to replenish their stocks as usual.¹⁹

The pattern of shortages documented by the SEMC reveals two distinct mechanisms that should be differentiated. First, there are actual supply shortages affecting goods that depend entirely on external deliveries and are difficult to stockpile in large quantities, such as gasoline, LPG, and white flour. In these cases, higher prices alone cannot restore market equilibrium because the goods themselves are unavailable. Second, some goods remain available but at higher prices, including vegetables and fruit delivered along longer routes and diesel available in limited quantities at some stations. Here, price increases primarily reflect higher transport costs and greater risks.

The sale of wheat in small bags and restrictions on the quantity each customer can purchase indicate a shift toward informal rationing. Sellers are distributing limited stocks among as many customers as possible, while some may be withholding part of their supplies in anticipation of further price increases.

B. Fuel and Household LPG Crisis

The energy sector has emerged as the weakest link in the crisis. According to field accounts, diesel was still available in relatively limited quantities at some stations in early October, selling for around YER 50,000 per 20-liter container, equivalent to

¹⁸ Taiz Office of Industry and Trade, *Six-Month Contingency Plan* (attachment to the governor's letter), cited above.

¹⁹ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above.

approximately YER 2,500 per liter. By the end of the first week of October, it had disappeared entirely from fuel stations, with limited quantities available on the black market at around YER 90,000 per 20 liters.

Gasoline also disappeared from stations and shifted to the black market, where it was sold in small containers at certain roundabouts and in residential neighborhoods. A 20-liter quantity cost more than YER 100,000, equivalent to approximately YER 5,000 per liter. Household LPG disappeared from most sales outlets, although cylinders were occasionally available on the black market for more than YER 30,000.²⁰

An official letter from the governor to the UN humanitarian official confirms that the siege has doubled fuel prices and led to the closure of all fuel stations.²¹ However, the letter does not specify the baseline prices against which the 100% increase was calculated. Its description of all stations as closed also differs from the SEMC's field findings, which recorded diesel availability at some stations. This discrepancy may reflect differences in the timing of the assessments or distinguish between complete closure and intermittent operations.

Official documents reveal the scale of the supply gap, although their estimates differ. The governor's letter puts actual monthly requirements at approximately 12.35 million liters of gasoline and 9.72 million liters of diesel.²² By contrast, the attached emergency plan of the city estimates that six months of fuel supplies for a population of three million would require approximately 33 million liters of gasoline and 21 million liters of diesel, equivalent to 5.5 million and 3.5 million liters per month, respectively. The plan records "none" as the available stock for both fuels and identifies deficits of 60% for household LPG and 61% for gas transported by tanker trucks.²³

The fuel crisis is affecting other parts of the economy, including transport, essential services, and commercial operating costs. Higher gasoline and diesel prices directly increase the cost of operating buses within the city and distributing goods between neighborhoods, pushing up the prices of goods and services and the cost of travel for residents.²⁴ Essential services are also directly affected, including hospital operations and other public and health facilities, as well as the loss of a major portion of the fuel

²⁰ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above.

²¹ Taiz Governor's Letter No. 1067, October 8, 2026, cited above.

²² Taiz Governor's Letter No. 1067, October 8, 2026, cited above.

²³ Taiz Office of Industry and Trade, *Six-Month Contingency Plan* (attachment to the governor's letter), cited above.

²⁴ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above.

used to pump water (see Section Five).²⁵ Fuel-dependent commercial and productive activities are facing higher costs, from flour mills and bakeries to workshops and private electricity providers.

C. Wheat, Flour, and Food Supply Security in Local Markets

The quantities of milled wheat available to traders have declined, with only limited stocks remaining among some suppliers. A 50-kilogram sack was selling for approximately YER 50,000, equivalent to around YER 1,000 per Kg. As supplies dwindled, some retailers began selling wheat in smaller bags, some weighing no more than one Kg. At certain outlets, customers were unable to purchase more than 10 kg at a time.

Traders reported that white flour had become unavailable in most shops. Some attributed this to the fact that they do not store it in large quantities because it is susceptible to deterioration during prolonged storage, compounded by the inability of new shipments to reach the city after the two routes were closed.²⁶ These accounts describe conditions at the outlets covered by the SEMC's monitoring; they do not establish that flour has disappeared throughout the entire city. Nor did the monitoring cover mills, bakeries, or the inventories of major distributors. The price of milled wheat in 10-kilogram quantities also rose to YER 11,500, compared with YER 9,000 before the latest escalation.

More important than the price itself is the remaining supply buffer. According to the six-month emergency plan prepared by the Office of Industry and Trade, wheat and flour stocks in government-controlled districts total 20,000 metric tons, against estimated requirements of 189,000 metric tons over six months. The SEMC's calculations indicate that the available stocks represent approximately 10.6% of the projected requirement, equivalent to roughly 19 days of consumption at the rate assumed in the plan.

The buffer is even narrower for other commodities. Recorded stocks of cooking oil would cover approximately four days of projected demand, milk around 12 days, rice around 35 days, and sugar around 39 days.²⁷

Meanwhile, on October 2, the World Food Programme (WFP) cited traders' estimates that wheat stocks were sufficient to meet demand for two months, without specifying

²⁵ Taiz Governor's Letter No. 1067, October 8, 2026, cited above

²⁶ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above.

²⁷ Taiz Office of Industry and Trade, *Six-Month Contingency Plan* (attachment to the governor's letter), cited above.

the geographical area covered by the assessment.²⁸ Despite the difference between the two estimates, both point to the same conclusion: unless wheat and flour deliveries to the city resume, the remaining supply buffer is measured in weeks rather than months. Shortages at retail outlets could consequently spread across the city, potentially triggering a major humanitarian crisis.

D. Vegetables, Fruit, and Transport Costs

According to vegetable traders, shipments of vegetables and fruit had been reaching the city through the eastern crossing,²⁹ even though, since its reopening in June 2024, the route had remained restricted to light vehicles and had never been officially opened to commercial freight.³⁰

Following its closure, some shipments were diverted along a lengthy alternative route beginning in Al-Hawban and passing through Al-Sittin Street, Hajdah, Al-Barh, the Mawza junction, Al-Kadahah, Al-Bireen, and Najd Qusaim before reaching Al-Dhabab and the city. Traders reported that using this route had increased transport costs, pushing up the prices of products sold in local markets.³¹

Because vegetables and fruit are highly perishable, longer journeys do more than raise transport costs: they also increase spoilage and may prompt traders to reduce shipment volumes or limit deliveries to varieties less susceptible to damage. This, in turn, could reduce the diversity of food available to households.

E. Purchasing Power and the Local Economy

These developments are converging on household real incomes. As fuel, LPG, wheat, and vegetable prices rise simultaneously while nominal incomes remain unchanged at best, purchasing power is rapidly eroding, particularly among poorer households, for whom food and energy account for the largest share of expenditure.

Field accounts indicate that households are responding by reducing their purchases or switching to smaller packages and quantities. Although buying in smaller quantities helps households cope with limited day-to-day cash availability, it generally means

²⁸ WFP, press statement, October 2, 2026, cited above.

²⁹ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above

³⁰ Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 2024, cited above.

³¹ Field accounts collected by the SEMC during the first week of October 2026, cited above.

paying more per unit and undermines their ability to build up household reserves to protect themselves against future supply disruptions.

Three groups face the heaviest burden. Daily wage workers are affected both by slowing economic activity and by rising commuting costs. Retailers and small businesses face difficulties replenishing stocks at higher costs amid weakening demand, threatening to erode their working capital. Displaced households and their host communities face the same price increases with fewer resources.

It is important to distinguish the direct effects of the current closures from the structural problems that preceded them, including low incomes, currency depreciation, and rising transport costs resulting from the siege imposed in 2015. The latest closures are compounding the economic and humanitarian hardship already experienced by households.

How Road Closures Affect Residents' Lives

Available evidence points to four main channels through which the closures are affecting residents.

First, physical supply constraints, as the flow of goods is interrupted and stocks are depleted. Second, higher costs, as transport and distribution become more expensive along longer and more dangerous routes. Third, liquidity and financing constraints, as traders struggle to deposit cash and transfer funds to finance purchases. Fourth, declining incomes and purchasing power, which undermine households' ability to afford essential goods and disrupt fuel-dependent economic activities.

The indicators suggest that the market has moved from the price shock documented by WFP in the weeks before the road was cut off to the quantitative rationing observed by the SEMC in early October. If supply flows are not restored in the coming weeks, the next stage could involve the breakdown of the market's ability to provide essential goods altogether, leaving money unable to secure commodities regardless of how much consumers are willing to pay.

5. Humanitarian Impacts

A. Displacement and Pressure on Host Communities

As of October 7, 2026, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had recorded 201,217 people (33,776 households) displaced across Yemen since the latest fighting began, including 197,755 people displaced since September 1. IOM data reveal a marked acceleration in displacement: the number rose from approximately 76,000 in mid-September to more than 145,000 by the end of the month, before exceeding 201,000 on October 7, with displacement spreading across ten governorates. Taiz

Governorate is the most affected, with 114,708 displaced people, accounting for 57% of those displaced since the fighting began. It is followed by Lahj (42,264), Aden (20,814), Abyan (9,030), and Al Hudaydah (8,244).³²

Within Taiz Governorate, approximately three-quarters of recorded displacement cases are concentrated in three districts: Al-Ma'afer (31,230), Jabal Habashi (31,020), and Al-Shamayatatn (24,894).² These are rural districts outside the city limits, so their displaced populations must not be counted as part of the city's population. However, they are geographically and commercially connected to the city and lie along the southwestern corridor through which the supply route ran. With the closure of the Taiz–Al-Turbah–Lahj–Aden Road and continued clashes around Al-Turbah, Jabal Habashi, and Al-Ma'afer,³ these host communities and the people displaced to them face the risk of secondary displacement and similar supply disruptions. IOM reports that the needs of the households it interviewed are distributed across shelter (35%), food (33%), cash assistance (22%), and protection (approximately 10%), at a time when only 20% of Yemen's Humanitarian Response Plan has been funded.

Within the city, the number of internally displaced households reported as being “within the city” stands at 40,657.⁵ However, the table underlying this figure covers eight districts, five of which lie outside the city, At-Ta'ziyah, Al-Misrakh, Jabal Habashi, Saber Al-Mawadim, and Mashra'a wa Hadnan, and combines long-term and newly displaced populations. Recalculating the figures in the table shows that the three urban districts host 27,950 displaced households, or approximately 69% of the total, including 3,106 newly displaced households. Al-Mudhaffar District has the largest number, with 12,754 displaced households, including 2,508 newly displaced households.⁶ The table estimates the number of individuals by multiplying the number of households by approximately seven, making its individual-level figures estimates. Its figures also differ from IOM data for districts covered by both sources. For example, the table records 17,838 newly displaced people in Jabal Habashi, compared with 31,020 reported by IOM. This discrepancy likely reflects differences in methodology, data-collection dates, and the definition of “newly displaced.”

The large displaced population adds to the pressure on housing, water, and health services in a city that the UN Special Envoy has said is hosting most of the newly displaced people fleeing fighting in other areas³³, at a time when the city's capacity to receive supplies has fallen to its lowest levels. Some people displaced from Mocha are living in abandoned buildings near front lines. The World Food Programme (WFP) has

³² International Organization for Migration (IOM), “Yemen Displacement Tops 200,000, Needs Soar and Funding Alarming Dries Up,” press release, October 7, 2026. <https://www.iom.int/news/yemen-displacement-tops-200000-needs-soar-and-funding-alarming-dries>

³³ Office of the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, “Statement by UN Special Envoy for Yemen on Taiz,” October 1, 2026. <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/en/news/statement-by-un-special-envoy-for-yemen-on-taiz>

reported that displaced families are arriving in the vicinity of Taiz city after spending days walking without water or food, with many having been displaced for the second, third, or even fourth time.³⁴

B. Food Security

The wave of displacement coincides with a rapid deterioration in food security. On October 2, 2026, WFP announced that 74% of households in areas it could access were unable to meet their basic food needs, the highest level recorded during the year. This indicator does not apply to Taiz alone; it covers areas where WFP operates. The agency reported that fighting had cut off its access to parts of Taiz and Al Hudaydah, affecting approximately 350,000 people it had been serving. It also said it had assisted more than 70,000 people in Taiz and Lahj and needed \$109 million to provide emergency assistance to up to 1.5 million people affected by the escalation. WFP also warned that it had reallocated resources from distributions scheduled for November and that the most vulnerable groups would face assistance gaps in the coming month unless new funding became available.

Field reports add a local dimension to these indicators. The absence of white flour from most shops, rationing of wheat sales, and rising vegetable prices mean that households inside the city are facing both declining purchasing power and reduced availability of goods. This simultaneous deterioration makes cash assistance alone insufficient if the closure continues, because cash cannot buy goods that are unavailable in the market. This is consistent with WFP's observation that some communities can only be reached through in-kind assistance because nearby markets are limited or inaccessible from displacement sites.

C. Water, Health, and Essential Services

Water is the most critical vulnerability among Taiz's essential services. According to the Taiz governor's letter, the city is experiencing severe water scarcity and a sharp deterioration in drinking-water sources and supplies due to disruptions to water-tanker access and the interruption of supplies to critical wells, compounded by an acute shortage of diesel needed to operate wells inside the city and through the local water utility's branch network. According to the letter, the network requires 90,000 liters of diesel to operate, of which 65,000 liters per month had been supplied by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). These supplies have been interrupted due to the road closures. The suspended supply represents approximately 72% of the stated operating requirement, meaning that the public network's pumping capacity could fall to a limited fraction of its normal level unless supplies resume or alternatives are provided. In such circumstances, households are likely to become increasingly

³⁴ World Food Programme, "Yemen's hunger crisis deepens quickly as conflict escalates," October 2, 2026. <https://www.wfp.org/stories/yemens-hunger-crisis-deepens-quickly-conflict-escalates>

dependent on commercial water tankers, which also rely on diesel and accessible roads. This would drive up water costs as incomes decline and increase the risk of disease in the city.

In the health sector, the governor's letter indicates that the fuel crisis is directly affecting hospital operations. There is a recent precedent for this warning: in July 2024, Al-Thawra General Hospital suspended operations and dialysis sessions due to a diesel shortage. The closure of the eastern crossing also deprives patients coming from Al-Hawban, including people with chronic conditions who used to travel to the city for treatment for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease, of the shortest route to its hospitals. The SEMC does not yet have field data on hospital fuel and medicine stocks, water-tanker prices, or epidemiological surveillance indicators. These information gaps require urgent verification by health authorities and the health, water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors of the humanitarian response.

D. Humanitarian Access

Humanitarian response depends not only on funding and stocks, but also on safe corridors for transporting food, water, medicines, and shelter materials, as well as for the movement of humanitarian workers themselves. On October 1, 2026, the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen expressed concern over the escalation of fighting in Taiz Governorate, citing reports of casualties and damage to infrastructure, and noting that road closures were affecting civilians' ability to leave affected areas. He renewed his call on Ansar Allah to halt its military offensive and called for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as safe and unimpeded access to people in need. He also emphasized that he was in close contact with the Yemeni government and Ansar Allah to contain the situation and ensure freedom of movement for civilians. WFP reported that transporting food to frontline areas was becoming increasingly difficult due to insecurity, disrupted transport routes, and rising delivery costs. The impact of the closures is also evident in restrictions on personnel movement: the mine-clearance organization HALO Trust reported that around 30 of its staff remained inside the city and could not leave until the roads reopened.

The situation is further complicated by the risks facing humanitarian personnel working for the United Nations and local organizations. The Houthi group has prohibited all activities by the United Nations and local organizations and has previously seized dozens of international and local organizations' offices in Mocha and Al-Turbah following its takeover of those areas.

In his letter to the Humanitarian Coordinator, the governor of Taiz called for pressure to be brought to bear to reopen main and secondary roads and ensure the unimpeded passage of civilians, goods, medicines, and aid. He also requested an urgent relief

intervention covering food baskets, medical supplies, fuel, and operational necessities for hospitals and service facilities, as well as the issuance of a UN statement clarifying the scale of the siege. The SEMC notes that the needs plan attached to the letter estimates the cost of securing six months' worth of food and fuel stocks at approximately \$741 million for the government-controlled districts of the governorate.

E. The Most Vulnerable Groups

Risks are concentrated among groups for whom sufficient disaggregated data are not available in Taiz, making caution necessary when drawing general conclusions. Displaced people, particularly those displaced multiple times, are among the most exposed, with many living in camps lacking basic services or in abandoned buildings near front lines. Low-income households and daily wage workers are also highly vulnerable to the erosion of purchasing power. Across areas affected by the escalation more broadly, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that more than 3,200 pregnant women are among the displaced,³⁵ while WFP estimates that approximately 2.2 million children under five in Yemen suffer from acute malnutrition.¹² People with chronic illnesses and older adults face the risk of medicine shortages and difficulty accessing hospitals. None of the available sources has documented the specific circumstances of people with disabilities in Taiz, leaving a gap that protection assessments should address.

6. Economic and Humanitarian Outlook for the Coming Weeks

This assessment covers the next four weeks, through early November 2026, and is shaped by five key variables: the status of the Taiz–Al-Turbah road and the categories of vehicles permitted to use it; the government authorities' decision regarding the eastern crossing; the volume of fuel entering the city; the course of clashes in Al-Shamayatayn, Jabal Habashi, and Al-Ma'afer; and the level of humanitarian funding. The following scenarios are conditional on how these variables evolve.

Scenario	Food and Fuel	Prices	Transport and Population Movement	Humanitarian Response
1. Continued closures and disrupted	White flour, gasoline, and cooking gas	Sharp increases in black-market	Partial paralysis of transport	Overland supplies come to a halt; the

³⁵ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), “Flash Update on the Hostilities in Yemen (15–28 September 2026),” September 2026. The figures cover all areas affected by the escalation, not Taiz alone. <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/flash-update-hostilities-yemen-15-28-september-2026>

supplies: Both routes remain closed, with only intermittent passage for light vehicles along mountain routes.	disappear from formal supply channels; recorded wheat stocks are depleted within weeks; water pumping declines sharply.	prices, stricter rationing, and a widening gap between official and parallel-market prices.	within the city; civilians face difficulty leaving; secondary displacement from Al-Shamayatayn and Al-Ma'afer.	response depends entirely on pre-positioned stocks inside the city and negotiations to secure humanitarian corridors.
2. Partial or intermittent reopening: Light and medium vehicles are allowed through the Al-Turbah road or alternative routes during designated time windows, while heavy trucks remain prohibited.	Limited flows ease shortages of lightweight, high-value goods, but not heavy commodities such as wheat, fuel, and cooking gas.	Relative stabilization at elevated levels, with a persistent premium reflecting transport costs and risk.	Limited improvement in civilian movement, while security risks along the routes persist.	Small convoys may be able to enter, with priority given to fuel for water systems and hospitals.
3. More regular supplies restored: The Al-Turbah road reopens to trucks and the eastern crossing is reopened following a shift on the ground or a negotiated arrangement.	Gradual restocking over one to two weeks, with flour and cooking gas returning to shops.	Black-market prices decline, although they do not immediately return to pre-escalation levels because stocks must be rebuilt.	Partial resumption of movement, with the possibility that some displaced people may return.	An opportunity to build a reserve stock inside the city and accelerate aid deliveries.

In light of the information available as of October 10, including continued clashes around Al-Turbah and Jabal Habashi, the absence of any publicly announced negotiating track on Taiz's roads, and reports that only light vehicles have been allowed through, SEMC considers scenarios one and two the most likely over the next two weeks. The third scenario remains conditional on a decisive shift on the ground or a

humanitarian agreement brokered under UN auspices. Previous UN proposals for the gradual reopening of Taiz’s roads, including the July 2022 proposal, were not accepted by the Houthi group.³⁶

7. Recommendations and Urgent Priorities

Priority	Action	Responsible Entity	Problem Addressed
Immediate (within 72 hours)	Negotiate a temporary humanitarian and commercial arrangement allowing trucks carrying wheat, flour, fuel, cooking gas, and medicines to cross via the Taiz–Al-Turbah road during designated time windows, under a prior notification mechanism and UN supervision. The Houthi group should commit to not obstructing these crossings or targeting civilian roads.	Office of the UN Special Envoy; Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA; Yemeni government; Houthi group	Disruption of the main supply artery
Immediate	Replace the blanket closure of the eastern crossing with restricted access for civilians, patients, and food shipments, subject to defined security screening procedures that balance security considerations with residents’ needs.	Government authorities in Taiz (local authority and Taiz Military Axis Command)	Disruption of movement for people, vegetables, and patients
Immediate	Resume diesel supplies to the water utility (65,000 liters per month) through any available route or stockpile, and give absolute priority to fuel for water	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); Humanitarian Coordinator; water	Threats to water supplies and hospital operations

³⁶ Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies, 2024, cited above.

	pumping and hospital operations in any quantities entering the city.	and health sectors; local authority	
Immediate	Adopt and publicly announce a priority list for distributing available fuel and cooking gas, prioritizing hospitals, water wells, mills and bakeries, and ambulances. Regularly publish available quantities and strengthen oversight of sales in line with the proposal of the Office of Industry and Trade, while avoiding administrative price controls that could push goods into the black market.	Local authority; Office of Industry and Trade; Taiz branch of the Yemen Petroleum Company	Unavailability of gasoline and cooking gas and their diversion to the black market
Urgent	Activate ready-to-distribute food rations and in-kind assistance for the city and host districts, prioritizing in-kind aid over cash transfers where goods are absent from markets, with priority given to newly displaced people.	World Food Programme and Food Security Sector	Simultaneous decline in purchasing power and shortages of goods
Urgent	Address commercial banks' refusal to accept cash deposits from traders and establish transfer channels enabling Taiz traders to pay for purchases from Aden and the ports.	Central Bank of Yemen (Aden); Yemen Banks Association; Taiz Office of Commerce and Industry	Disruption of supply financing
Urgent	Fund WFP's emergency appeal (\$109 million) and the Humanitarian Response Plan, which is only 20% funded, while allocating flexible funding for fuel needed to sustain essential services.	Donors	Funding gap and the reallocation of November distributions
Short term (2–4 weeks)	Establish joint weekly monitoring of early-warning indicators and the availability of goods across	Cash and Markets Working Group; World Food Programme; Office	Lack of baseline prices and supply-flow data

	the three urban districts, including water-tanker prices, transport costs, and the number of trucks entering the city.	of Commerce and Industry; local research centers	
Short term	Assess the suitability of alternative routes (Karbah–Al-Sahha and the route proposed by the Office of Industry and Trade) for medium-sized trucks and repair hazardous sections.	Ministry of Public Works and Highways; Road Maintenance Fund; local authority	Dependence on rugged routes unsuitable for heavy transport
Short term	Harmonize displacement data using a unified list of districts, a standardized definition of newly displaced people, and a published household-size multiplier. Officially clarify the figures for the cost of the needs plan and its geographic coverage.	International Organization for Migration; Executive Unit for the Management of Displacement Camps; local authority; Supreme Emergency Committee	Inconsistencies in displacement and needs figures
Short term	Organize collective procurement and transportation of essential goods, share stock data with the local authority, and publicly commit to avoiding hoarding.	Taiz Office of Commerce and Industry and major traders	Supply shortages and stockpiling practices

Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)

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