



# Voices of

## Hajjah city, Abs and Haradh districts, Hajjah Governorate



Residents of Hajjah city, Abs and Haradh districts are extremely concerned about how to live, they call for security; access to drinking water and food commodities, and securing fuel and shelters for IDPs. IDPs' families are split up if they are hosted by relatives since the prevalence of a conservative culture frowns upon coexistence. Men have to search for other housing options leaving the women with their hosting families. They sometimes rent a house but renting has become very expensive. An alternative is to search for a public building as a temporary refuge.

### Main risks

- Increased unemployment rates (Hosting community and IDPs)
- Continuing flow of IDPs
- Depletion of resources
- Dysfunctional health system

### Coping mechanisms

- Reducing their living expenditures to the minimum
- Community-based social support has developed
- People are spending from their savings, and in some cases selling their possession of hard assets like gold and livestock
- Some people are currently selling vegetables and ice moving from one village/area to another seeking alternative livelihoods options

## At a glance:

- Food commodities prices have **increased** by 25 – 75%
- Fuel **prices** have increased by 150 – 800% in the **black** market
- Public **transportation** costs have increased by 50 – 400%
- People display signs of **trauma** as a result of the **airstrikes**
- Increased number of **IDPs** who fled from Sana'a, Hajjah, Sada'a and other war-affected governorates for **fear** of their **lives**
- Volatile **security** situation: The continuous **crisis** may lead to an increase rate of **crimes** from rising **poverty**

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# Opportunities



### **Vocational skills:**

Sewing and selling clothes - particularly during Eid season - have the opportunity to raise income, and can be further developed through acquiring new vocational skills.



### **Agricultural livelihoods options:**

Existing agricultural livelihoods assets can yield to diversification of activities. These include rearing livestock and selling dairy products. Food security can also be enhanced through home gardening, using existing gardens to cultivate grains and vegetables.

# Challenges

**Lack of CSO support:** Many NGOs are keeping track of IDPs arrivals through informal registration but no assistance has been provided.

**Impact of Electricity Outages:** Hajjah City, Abs and Haradh experience full electricity outages for nearly two months. A minority of the population can afford the fuel costs needed to use generators, while the majority rely on lanterns and candles. People also charge their mobile phone in shops that have generators, paying about USD 0.23 to 0.47 (YR 50, YR100) per each mobile charge.

**Local authority:** People participate in the local councils through their selected and elected representatives. The elected councilors are ideally supposed to represent their constituents and fulfil their needs. However, the local authority of the district is centralized and the decision making is at the hands of the powerful leading representatives.

**Declining health system:** The current situation and lack of electricity has impacted hospitals and health care centers, with most of their doctors and personnel having left. Hospitals are lacking critical equipment such as blood refrigerators.

**High unemployment within IDPs:** Most IDPs do not have jobs in the host community either because the impact of the current crisis on the market or lack of matching job skills. The fact that they are outsiders to the host community is reported to play a role in their inability to secure jobs. Some children are forced to work to secure their livings and some others beg for food and money.

**Gender imbalance in local governance:** Women do not participate in district local authorities, their societal role is merely restricted to raise children and manage households. They can only work when their husband's and families' permit.

**Impact on housing/shelter:** People lost their houses due to airstrike campaigns and bombardments; some of the houses were robbed. In most cases, four to six families live in the same house, burdening both the IDP and host families.

**Water scarcity:** Provision of potable water becomes challenging as water rarifies. People can only find drinking water in shops adding extra costs for already struggling families. Water for other purposes can be fetched from wells, adding a burden over children and women who are primarily responsible for collecting water. They carry water on their backs for many hours, impacting on their health on the long run.

**Weak governmental support:** The fragile role of the local government to provide foods and shelters for IDPs.

**Aid Duplication:** There is a lack of coordination between NGOs to provide assistance. Overlap was encountered as a result focusing mainly on provision of food and Non Food Items.

**Community leaders have a limited role on social cohesion:** It was reported that the roles of social, political and religious leaders are perceived as weak to strengthen social solidarity amongst people.

*"Voices of" is a series of community-level consultations led by UNDP in Yemen using inclusive focus group discussions that seek to: identify their fragilities, prioritise opportunities and challenges, and highlight the vulnerability of community livelihoods assets to sustain the crisis.*



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