



By: Abeer Al-Mutawakel

April 2019

THE SUFFERING BEHIND THE STALEMATE: THE HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT IN SERWAH DISTRICT



Cover Photo: The ancient temple of Serwah (Kmatara, Wikimedia, 2004).

About the author

Abeer Al-Mutawakel is a consultant with DeepRoot Consulting. She is also an associate researcher at the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University. Abeer's research and consulting work focuses on development and humanitarian interventions in conflict situations, including issues of forced migration, protection, peacebuilding, and empowerment of marginalised groups. While her main focus is on Yemen, she has also worked closely with Syrian refugees in Saidah, Lebanon to study the impact of refugees and displaced populations on host communities, and local responses to the influx of refugees. Abeer was previously the General Manager of one of the largest hospitals in Yemen. She holds an MA in Development and Emergency Practice and a BSc in Management Information Systems.

About the project

The Supporting Inclusive Peace-making Efforts and Political Transition in Yemen project is implemented in partnership between CMI and DeepRoot and funded by the European Union. The initiative is designed to provide flexible and effective support to peace efforts and the ensuing political transition in Yemen, and to contribute to restoring a culture of dialogue for the resolution of disagreements ahead of and during a potential peace process. As such, the initiative is premised on ensuring practical and collaborative work amongst key actors at all levels, local, national, regional, and international.

About the Implementing Partners

Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) is an independent Finnish organisation, founded in 2000 by former President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Martti Ahtisaari. CMI works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation, based on the principles of honest mediation, local ownership, inclusiveness and complementarity. The organization has grown since its establishment to become one of the leaders in this field.

DeepRoot Consulting is a consulting firm that is focused on development issues in Yemen. DeepRoot aims to provide assistance to international development actors, the private sector, local civil society organisations and the Yemeni Government in order to anchor their interventions in a deep understanding of Yemen's national and local contexts, and international best practices. DeepRoot's management and advisory board has a long working experience in Yemen in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank all those who dedicated some time out of their busy schedules to participate in interviews or share data and reports for this research. They provided the author with valuable input that enriched this research and made it possible.

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the European Union, and the valuable suggestions, feedback and guidance provided by Professor Sultan Barakat. The author is also thankful and grateful to CMI and DeepRoot staff who contributed to the preparation of this research which would not have been possible without their invaluable advice and support, and in particular: Brett Scott, Khatab Al-Rawhani and Dr. Belal Al-Rawhani

Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction.....	4
Part 2: The Local Context.....	6
Part 3: Displacement	10
3.1 Location	10
3.2 Shelter	12
3.3 Livelihoods	13
3.4 Humanitarian aid	14
3.5 Education	16
3.6 Health.....	17
Part 4: Conclusion	20

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of infrastructure damage in Serwah	9
Table 2: Locations of IDPs in Serwah	11
Table 3: Hospitals operating in Marib Governorate	18

List of Figures

Figure 1: Marib Governorate Map	4
Figure 2: Color-coded map of Serwah.....	5
Figure 3: Serwah's three sub-districts and their villages	6
Figure 4: Travel routes between Marib and Sana'a	8
Figure 5: Shelter conditions in Serwah.....	12
Figure 6: A girl playing in one of the IDPs camps in Serwah	14
Figure 7: Frequency of assistance received by IDPs in Serwah (2017-2018)	15
Figure 8: A classroom in one of the IDP camps in Serwah	16
Figure 9: Map of Health centres in Serwah and surrounding areas	19
Figure 10: IDPs in Arak/Thinah, Serwah	20



*This project is implemented in partnership
between DeepRoot and CMI*



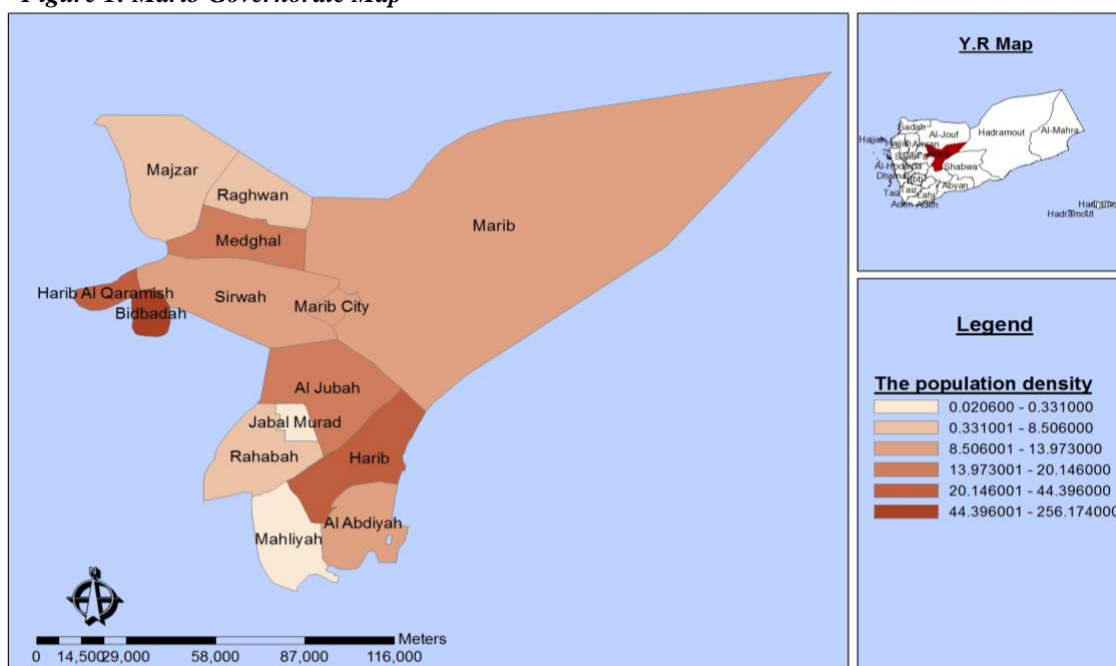
*This project is funded
by the European Union*

Part 1: Introduction

This report attempts to provide a better understanding of the conditions present in Serwah district, namely with regards to the humanitarian situation and the destruction of infrastructure that has occurred as a result of the ongoing conflict. The research was conducted for the “*Supporting Inclusive Peace-Making Efforts and Political Transition in Yemen*” project funded by the European Union.

The information presented in this report is based on extensive interviews conducted in October and November of 2018 with locals from Serwah and Marib more generally, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), local authorities, and non-governmental organizations. These were accompanied by a desk review of studies issued by local NGOs, online data sources, and local news reports and interviews.

Figure 1: Marib Governorate Map

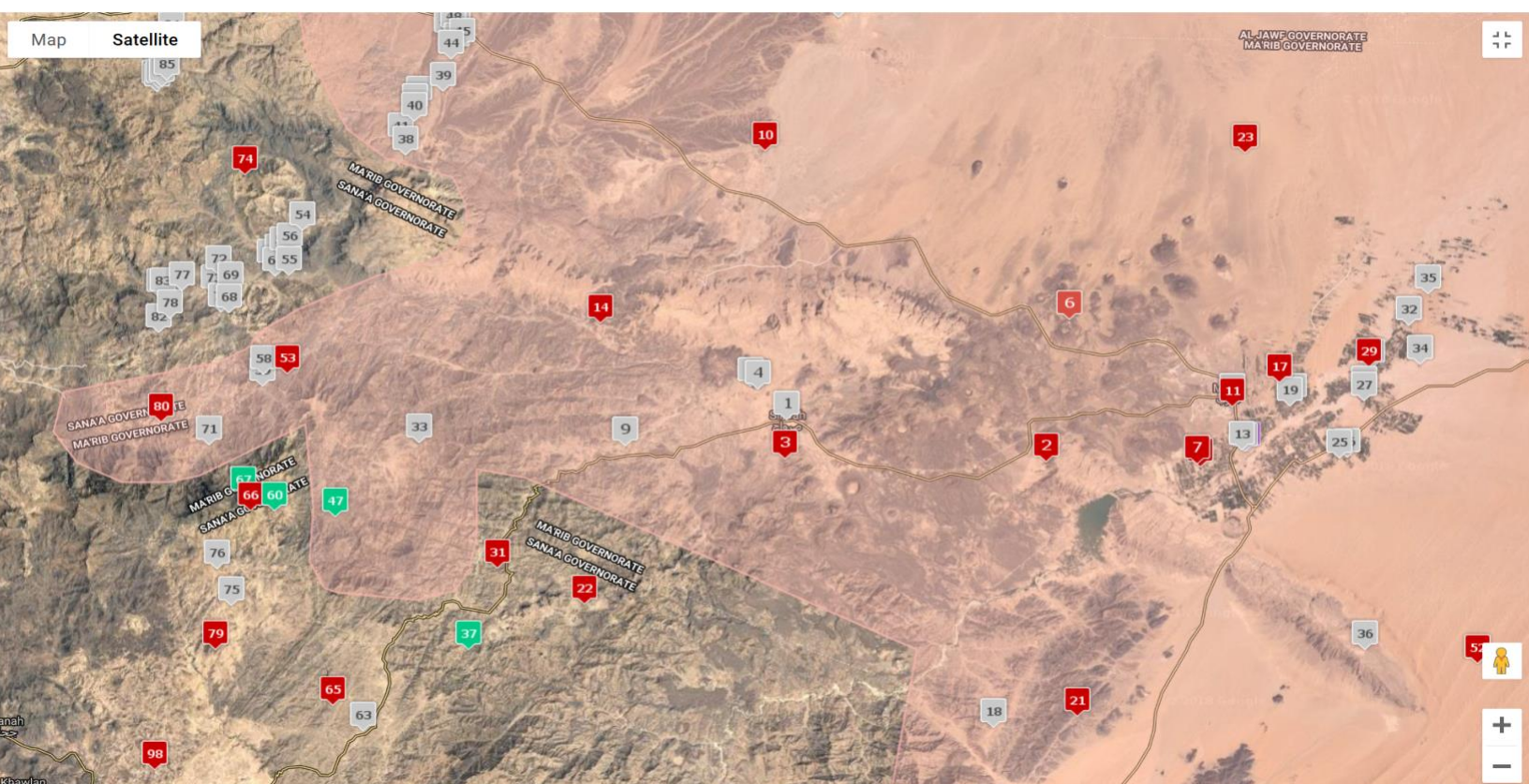


Source: Republic of Yemen, National Information Center

While conducting this research, a number of limitations were faced. Official data on Serwah and Marib is largely outdated, and the local council in Serwah was unable to provide specific information regarding the damage to infrastructure because access is restricted by the ongoing conflict. Moreover, most telecom towers in Serwah have been destroyed, making even remote access to local interviewees difficult and unpredictable.

Throughout the report, color-coded numerical markers for sub-districts and areas in and surrounding Serwah district are used, as per *Figure 2* below. It should be noted that inside the district of Serwah there is a sub-district also named Serwah (*see figure 3*). Any reference to Serwah in this report that is not specified as “sub-district” should be assumed to refer to the district.

Figure 2: Color-coded map of Serwah



Sub-Districts			Populated Areas/Villages			
#	Name	#	Name	#	Name	
2	Arak	79	Bani Shadad	44	Al-Jufaynah	الجفينة
3	Serwah	80	Bani Amru	54	Al-Hawtah	الحوطة
6	Jibal Al-khashab	98	Al-Sahman	55	Al-Maqtarah	المخدرة/المقطرة
7	Al-Ashraf	1	Souq Serwah	58	Lakmah	لكمة
10	Madghil Al-Juda'an	4	Aal Suwaylih	58	AlLakmah	الكمة
11	Marib	9	Hazm Aal Dammaj	63	Bani Sulayhah	بني صليحة
14	Al-Mahjizah	13	Marib Al-Qadim	63	Al-Tarf	الطرف
17	Aal Jalal	18	Yala	71	Harrah	حرة
21	Ya'rah	19	Aal Jalal	75	Al-Shab Al-Aswad	الشعب الأسود
22	Al-Makir Al-Lughuba	27	Ar Ramsah	76	Al-Sha'abat	الشعبات
23	Aal Shabwan	32	Al-Marda Aal Mu'ayli	77	Al-Wutayr	الوطير
29	Aal Rashid Munayf	33	Bayt Al-Shaykh Al-Ghadir	78	Al-Jarabat	الجربات
31	Habbab Aal Hanash	34	Salwah	85	Al-Shatt	الشط
52	Aal Fujayh	35	Marda Aal Awshan			
53	Bani Sukran	36	Jadidah			
65	Al-A'rush	38	Al-Khaniq			
66	Khawlan Al-Tiwal	39	Al-Wajnah			
74	Iyal Ghufayr	40	Al-Jawniyah			

Source: GeoName (2018). Available at: <http://www.geonames.org/6940839/Serwah.html>

Part 2: The Local Context

Serwah is one of Marib's 14 districts, located 40 km west of Marib city and known as “the main gate to Sana'a” because of its strategic location. Serwah is considered one of Marib's major districts and it is divided into three sub-districts: *Al-Mahjiza* (المحجزة) [14], *Serwah* (صرواح) [3], and *Arak Dhinah* (اراك ذنه) [2]. Altogether, these three sub-districts contain 33 villages.¹ Figure 3 below shows each village and the sub-district it is located in.

Figure 3: Serwah's three sub-districts and their villages

صرواح Sirwah						المحجزة Al-Mahjiza		
Al-Swq (Sirwah Centre) السوق (مركز صرواح)	Al-Diyruh الديرة	Khaddaf خداف	Dawaar ضوار	Rahab رحب		Al-Multaqaa الملتقى	Jazama جزامه	Al-Raql الرقل
	Al-Khunq الخنق	Al-Jiribat الجيريات	Qatanah قطنه	Hylan هيلان	Al-Hamajiruh الحماجر	Al-Muhjizuh aleulya المحجزة العليا	Al-Hamduh الحمد	Al-Sarahuh السرحه
	Al-Radaminuh الردامنه	Al-Ghudu الغدو	Waeal وعل	Al-Kafi الكفي	Al-Khubu... الخبوه	Al-Diyq الضيق	Wadamajah وضمجه	Saqam سقام
	Al-Huzm الحزم	Al-Batn الباطن	Kunh كنه	Al-Huzm الحزم		Arak اراك		
Al-Mafatah المفاتيح						Al-Zor الزور	Al-Fare الفرع	Al-Haqil الحقييل

■ المحجزة Al-Mahjiza ■ صرواح Sirwah ■ اراك Arak

The topography of Serwah district is dominated by mountains, including both moderate and elevations and steep slopes. The district contains two main valleys: Wadi Al-Daiq and Wadi Hrum. Serwah is also considered an archaeological area and it is home to the Temple of Megaa (معبد المقة), which used to be a notable local tourist attraction.² The population of Serwah is estimated to be between 28,000 and 30,000,³ and the district is mainly inhabited by the Aal Jehm tribe (قبيلة آل جهم).

¹ Available at: الدليل الشامل < محافظة مأرب > مديرية صرواح

http://www.yemenna.com/index.php?go=guide&op=show_dir&ide=246.

² National Information Center (NIC): نبذة تعريفية عن محافظة مأرب. Available at:

<http://www.yemen-nic.info/gover/mareb/brife/>.

Serwah Marib Directorate مديرية صرواح مأرب. Available at: <https://goo.gl/BRJ7Wt>

<http://www.yemen-nic.info/contents/Brief/detail.php?ID=7611&print=Y>

المركز الوطني للمعلومات. Available at: <http://www.yemen-nic.info/contents/Brief/images/mareb.pdf>.

³ Serwah had a population of 20,000 in the last census in 2004 according to National Information Center (NIC). Worldometer estimates of Yemen's population in 2018 has increased by 41.5% since 2005. By using the same rate, Serwah's estimate population in 2018 should be between 28,000 to 30,000.

<http://www.yemen-nic.info/gover/mareb/brife/>; <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/yemen-population/>

Jehm is considered part of (descendent from) the greater Khawlan tribe, although there is not a clear hierarchical structure or power dynamic between the sub- and super-tribe. Prior to the conflict, Serwah's population was mainly dependent on farming, raising livestock, trade, and government jobs for their livelihoods.

Since early 2015, Serwah has been one of the most critical frontlines in the conflict between the Houthis and their allies on the one hand and the forces loyal to President Hadi on the other. From the local perspective, a key reason for the prolonged fighting in the district is that Serwah's natives are split amongst themselves and divided between the main conflicting parties. The confrontations are concentrated in the center of the district, mainly in the Serwah sub-district [3] where Serwah's central market (سوق) [1] is located, and across the spacious Sarawah plain that is overlooking the mountains and hills of Heylan, Murthid, Al-Ashgari, Al-Moshaja', Al-Makhdarah (هیلان ومرثد، الاشقري، المشجع، المخدره), and neighboring peaks.

As a result of the conflict, local infrastructure has suffered significant damage. Residential homes and property have been subjected to thousands of indiscriminate airstrikes and shells, reducing public life to a near standstill. According to a joint study conducted by local NGOs, nearly 90 percent of Serwah's population has been displaced, mostly to other areas within Serwah district itself, to Marib city [11], to other districts in the governorate, and to other governorates.⁴ The district manager of Serwah, Mar'i Al-Amiri (مرعي العامري), stated in May 2017 that at least 135 civilians have been killed and more than 170 injured, some of whom are permanently disabled.⁵

Al-Amiri further stated that around 320 houses have been destroyed and at least dozens of others damaged. Moreover, the conflict has destroyed around twenty farms and fifty shops in Serwah's central market area [1]. Dealers were forced to close their shops, withdraw their goods and discontinue any trading activities in the market, causing a loss in livelihood sources. Furthermore, four fuel stations in the district have been destroyed, resulting in a shortage in the local availability of petroleum products and forcing residents to travel long distances in order to obtain petrol and diesel.⁶ The district power plant and electrical network also suffered severe damage, resulting in the total loss of electric coverage in Serwah.⁷ Additionally, six local mosques were also destroyed.⁸

Schools in Serwah have been subjected to shelling, and five schools have been destroyed.⁹ Serwah's hospital and three health centers were damaged, causing residents to travel long distances

⁴ Project by Forum Students of Marib (FSMCD) and their 8 partners, funded by NED. Project: Activating the role of independent civil society organisations in promoting humanitarian response to the IDPs in Marib.

FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

⁵ Other interviewees suggested that the number of injured is around 300. No official statistics found. «منطقة منكوبة» صرواح available at: <https://www.al-arabi.com/Read/12568>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Damaged Mosques' names: Hazem Al-Rak Mosque, Al-Hathal Mosque, Al-Qulayb Mosque, New Souq Mosque, Old Mosque and Al-Fuheid Mosque

مسجد حزم الراك، مسجد آل هذال، مسجد القليب، مسجد السوق الجديد، المسجد القديم ومسجد الفهيد

⁹ Damaged schools' names: Khalid Bin Al Waleed School, Al-Thawra School, Balqis, Hazem Al-Raq School and Damaj School. مدرسة خالد بن الوليد، مدرسة الثورة، بلقيس، حزم الراك، ودماج

to Sana'a or neighbouring districts to seek treatment. Moreover, four water projects, five water pumps, and some artesian wells have also been destroyed.

The humanitarian burdens the abovementioned damage and destruction has placed on local residents is exacerbated by impediments to travel. In addition to heightened petrol prices and general instability, ten vital roads were damaged, causing the disruption of traffic and forcing people to use alternative rough roads.¹⁰ Before the conflict, two main routes were used to travel between Sana'a and Marib: Al-Fardha road, via Marib's northern Nehm district; and Al-Watada road, via Serwah district (*See figure 4*). The travel time using the Al-Watada route to Sana'a took around three hours. As a result of the conflict, an alternative route is now used through Al-Baydha governorate that takes staggering 13 to 14 hours, including the checkpoints.

Figure 4: Travel routes between Marib and Sana'a

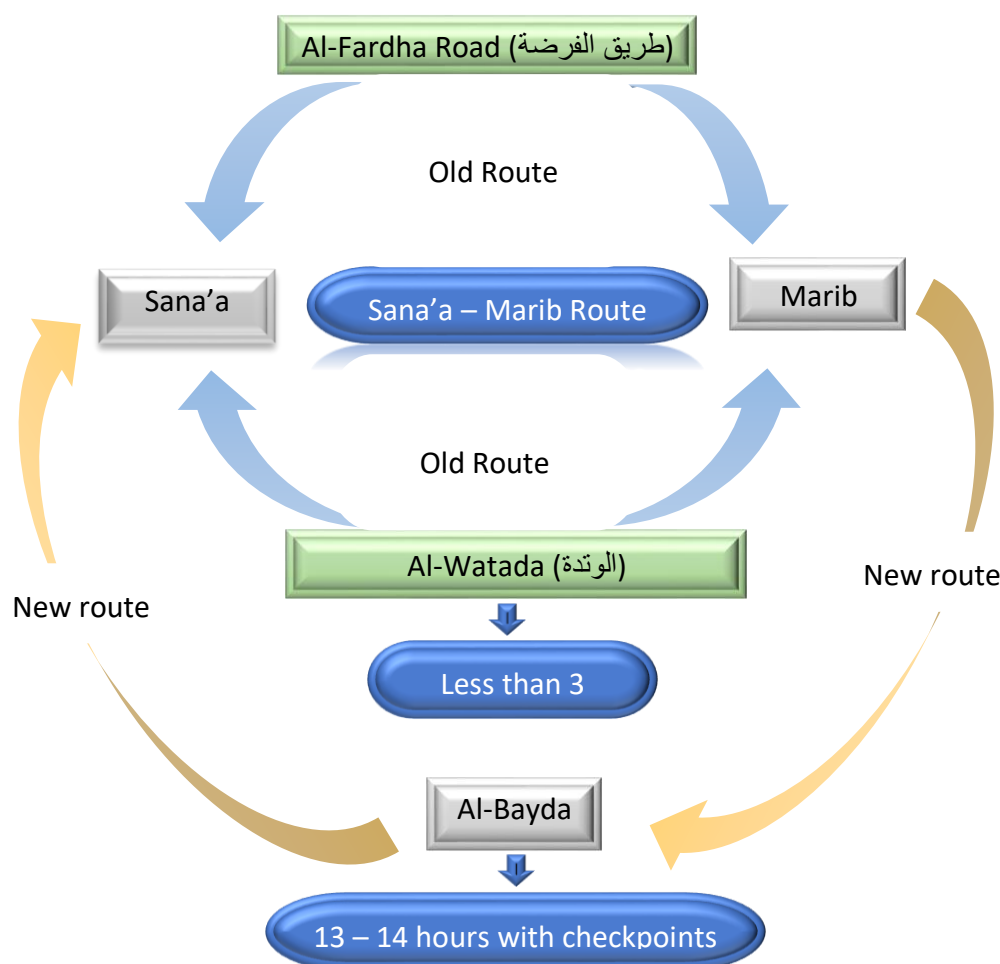


Table 1 on the following page provides a summary of the total known quantity of different types of infrastructure in Serwah, and the damage to or destruction of it where applicable. Due to the district being an active area of major hostilities, these figures should be treated as preliminary best estimates until access is improved.

¹⁰ See *Table 1* for a list of the road names. *Ibid.*

Table 1: Summary of infrastructure damage in Serwah¹¹

#	Infrastructure type	Total #	Damaged	Notes
1	Schools	56	5 completely destroyed, 48 partly damaged	The 56 schools include primary and secondary schools (2 secondary schools for girls). Three schools are still operating: 1 girls' school and 2 mixed. Education centres were developed in IDP communities, but for primary education only.
2	Hospitals	1	1	Only two health units/centres are still providing health services (Al-Zor centre & Al-Sawabeen unit). The rest are not operating and that is due to a lack of staff and medicine as a result of the war. It should be noted that some medical equipment and ambulance cars were stolen. There are 4 health centres under construction.
3	Health centres/clinic	3		
4	Health Units	6		
5	Roads	Unknown	10	The damaged roads are named: Al-Zor, Al-Damnah, Al-Haqil, No'a, Radinah, Al-Rumdah, Aal Hajlan, Al-Dharb, Al-Shatib, and Wadi Fara'a bridge. الزور والدمنة والحقيل ونوع الزور والدمنة والحقيل ونوع وردينة والرمضة وآل حجلان والضرب والشطب وكبري وادي فرعة
6	Mosques	Unknown	6	
7	Gas stations	4	4	Damaged/destroyed
8	Shops	Unknown	50	
9	Houses	Unknown	320 completely destroyed	There are estimates of over 1,000 damaged homes. There are also reports of stolen private properties including cars.
10	Water projects	Unknown	4	
11	Water pumps	Unknown	5	
12	Artesian wells	Unknown	Unknown	
13	Farms	Unknown	20	Suggestions have been made that numbers could be higher. Some farms were destroyed, burnt or water was cut off leading to drying up of land.
14	Electric power plant	1	1	Both the plant and the transmission cables for electricity were destroyed. It should be noted that not all villages in Serwah district had electricity, only highly populated areas.
15	Telecom towers			Mostly damaged. People in Serwah are isolated and need to go to certain areas in order to be able to make/receive a call.

¹¹ The data in this table is collected from the interview with the secretary general of the local council in Serwah District in addition to the following links:

نازحو-مأرب-54-ألفاء-والعدد-اد- Available at: <https://www.al-arabi.com/Issues/10975/> نازحو-مأرب-54-ألفاء-والعدد-اد- والعديد شغال available at: <https://www.al-arabi.com/Read/12568>.

Names of health facilities: Serwah Rural Hospital, Al Mahjazah Rural Hospital, Al Zoor Health Center, Aal Hajlan Health Unit, Dhamjah Health Unit.

Health Facility Viewer. Available at: www.mophp-ye.org/HFV_Marib/english/index_eng.html.

FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة. الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

Part 3: Displacement

Displacement is an expected result of any conflict and the destruction that comes with it. There are about 25,455 displaced families currently located in Marib governorate, with an average of 6 family members in each family.¹² These displaced families come from different districts of Marib but also from outside of the governorate. Marib city [11] hosts around 5,517 displaced families from around Yemen, including 511 families from other districts in Marib governorate who have sought shelter in the city.¹³

As for Serwah, it was reported that there are around 3,476 families who are internally displaced within the district itself. Out of the IDPs in Serwah, it is estimated that around 85 percent of them are from Serwah and other district in Marib, while around 15 percent are from outside Marib.¹⁴ Residents of Serwah who have become displaced outside of the district have primarily relocated to Sana'a governorate, the capital secretariat (Sana'a city), and neighbouring Marib districts such as Marib city [11], Ragwan, Mujzar, and Harib Al-Karamish (حريب القراميش، مجزر، روغان).¹⁵ Over 40 percent of the displaced families in Serwah district were subject to secondary displacement¹⁶ as a result of increases in the rent and living expenses in cities like Sana'a and Marib. They were forced to relocate again to rural and remote areas, and away from services such as electricity, transportation, health, and water.

3.1 Location

Within Serwah district itself, IDPs are mainly concentrated in three areas in Arak sub-district [2]: East of Thinah area, known as Al-Rawdah (الروضة – ذنة الشرقية), West of Thinah area, known as Al-Sawabeen (الصوابين – ذنة), and Al-Zor village (الزور), since most of the other areas are either partially or mostly affected by the conflict. Table 2 below provides a detailed description of where most IDPs in Serwah district are located. The three areas are considered relative 'safe areas' within Serwah district. Although these areas are considered safe and away from the frontline, a number of interviewed IDPs have reported that there are mines in surrounding areas and people living there need to be extra cautious and avoid taking unknown routes when travelling or even grazing sheep.

¹² FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

¹³ The Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) (2018) الدراسة الميدانية لتقييم الوضع الإنساني للنازحين في محافظة مأرب

¹⁴ FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

¹⁵ Ragwan, Mujzar, and Harib al-Karamish districts are some of Marib's governorate 14 districts.

«منطقة منكوبة» صرواح... available at: <https://www.al-arabi.com/Read/12568>

نازحو-مأرب-54-ألفا-والعد-اد-شغ-<https://www.al-arabi.com/Issues/10975/> نازحو مأرب: 54 ألفاً... والعداد شغال 20% أكثر 20% الم

FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

¹⁶ Ibid.

Table 2: Locations of IDPs in Serwah

Area/village		Neighbourhood		No. of families (avg)
Al-Rawdah	الروضة	Al-Rawdah	الروضة	251.6
Lafaj Al-Mulih	لفج الملح	Lafaj Al-Mulih	لفج الملح	19
Arak	أراك	Arak	أراك	557.4
Bait Al-Zaydy & Bait Al Hial	بيت الزايدي + بيت ال هيال	Bait Al-Zaydy	بيت الزايدي	350
Al-Zor	الزور	Al-Hiyal	الهيال	495
Al-Zor	الزور	Al-Hiyal Al-S'd	الهيال السد	172.5
Al-Zor	الزور	Al-Zor	الزور	43.3
Al-Sawabeen	الصوابين	Al-Sawabeen	الصوابين	602.4
Bait Al-Musamaa	بيت المسمى	Aal Musamaa	الكفي- ال المسمى	112
Bait Al-Radmani	بيت الردmani	Al-Radmanah	الردمانه	134.6

Source: FSMCD (2018)

IDPs from Serwah are also located in Marib district together with IDPs from other Marib districts and other governorates. The IDPs are located in the following areas of Marib District: Al-Hadad الحد, Al-Jafina الجفينة, Al-Khasif الخسيف, Al-Rakhim الرخيم, Al-Rumayla الرميلا, Hayi Al-Rawdah حي الروضة, Al-Rawdah - kuliyyat almujtamae كلية المجتمع, Al-Mjme المجمع, Al-Faw الفاو, Al-Mutahaf المتحف, Al-Masanae المصنع, Al-Matar المطار, Al-Maghawir المغاوير, Al-Munin المنين, Aydat أيدات, Jawin Al-Eibar جو العبر, Husun Al Sueud حصون آل سعود, Al-Markaz alsihiyu المركز, Hayi Al-Sharika حي الشركة, Marib Al-Qadima القديمة, and Mafriq Al-Sadi مفرق السد.¹⁷

As for Serwah residents displaced to Sana'a, the majority of them are located in the areas of Mathbah, Al-Jiraf, Daris, Bani Al-Harith and Al-Sarf (مذبج والجراف ودارس وبني الحارث والسبعين).

When choosing where to relocate to, IDPs consider multiple criteria. One of the main criteria besides being a safe area is water. IDPs in Serwah district are mainly dependent on groundwater wells; therefore, they relocate to villages where it is a short walking distance to wells or it is easy to extend water pipes. Another criterion is the community, where families decide to join their extended families and friends who already moved to certain areas. Besides, work opportunities and services such as health and electricity also contribute to their decision making.

¹⁷ The Charitable Society for Social Welfare -CSSW (2018) مديرية (مأرب المدينة) محافظة مأرب- مديرية (الحزم) محافظة الجوف.

3.2 Shelter

Displaced people in Serwah live in unorganized gatherings. According to IDPs interviewees, there was no immediate response to shelter when conflict began in the district in 2015, and it was mainly the people (including women and children) themselves who built their dwellings or bought their tents. At first, people mainly used tents, but following multiple incidences of fires, people started using an iron structure, covered by tarp and making use of the Al-Ahl tree (a known tree in that area) as walls. An example of this type of structure is shown in *Figure 5* below. However, the IDPs who live in such open shelters continue to face the challenges of the occasional wind and sand storms or other weather changes, since it is hot during the day and cold during the night. A recent survey showed that 72 percent of IDPs in Serwah live in dwellings that consist of huts and houses built of wood, stones, and mud, while 17 percent consist of tents and the remainder – only 11 percent – live in houses, flats, public facilities and or with host families.¹⁸

Although emergency shelter and tools were provided by some organizations, a study by the Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) found that the shelter materials including blankets, mattresses, straw dwellings, tents, cooking materials, and household utensils are poor quality, are not meeting their intended purpose, and are sometimes distributed at times they are not needed or do not meet the needs of the displaced.¹⁹

Figure 5: Shelter conditions in Serwah



Source: Photographs by Sheikh Mohammed Tu'aiman

¹⁸ FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب.

¹⁹ The Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) (2018) الدراسة الميدانية لتقييم الوضع الإنساني للنازحين في محافظة مأرب.

During the interviews, IDPs from Serwah were asked about their reasons for not returning to their original dwellings. The main responses can be summarized as follows:

1. My area is safe now, but my home is destroyed.
2. I fear the war could return to my area.
3. The fighting has stopped in my area and I could return home with my nuclear family, but I choose to stay with my displaced community (due to the feeling of ‘shame’ in leaving one’s tribe or extended family in the camp while they cannot return home).
4. There is a need for the rehabilitation of livelihoods in order to return.

Some interesting examples of how communities support and collaborate during wartime emerged while conducting this research. These include the extension of water pipes, electricity cables, or providing shelter by host communities; some host families offer their guest room, the *Diwan* (ديوان) for free as shelter, while other ask for rent; and some host families make a deal with displaced families, by fixing the damaged part of the host’s house and a place to live is offered in return.

3.3 Livelihoods

Before the fighting reached Serwah in 2015, locals were mainly dependent on farming, raising livestock, trade and government jobs as livelihood sources. Most people lost their livelihood sources as a result of the conflict. Since the conflict started, IDP interviewees suggested that many have joined the army (or as referred to ‘a government job’) as a source of income. However, the salaries they receive are inconsistent and irregular, usually arriving every three to four months.

The recent field study on IDPs in Serwah showed that 66 percent of the IDP community has at least one member of their family who is working and among these working members, over 55 percent have government jobs. The rest continue to work in trade (5%), farming and raising livestock (3%), services (1%), private jobs (1%) and other jobs (6%)²⁰. The study also showed that 95 percent of the displaced households in Serwah district have a low income of less than 100 USD per month.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

* Percentages used are estimated from the graph bars represented in the report. Numbers might vary slightly.

Figure 6: A girl playing in one of the IDPs camps in Serwah



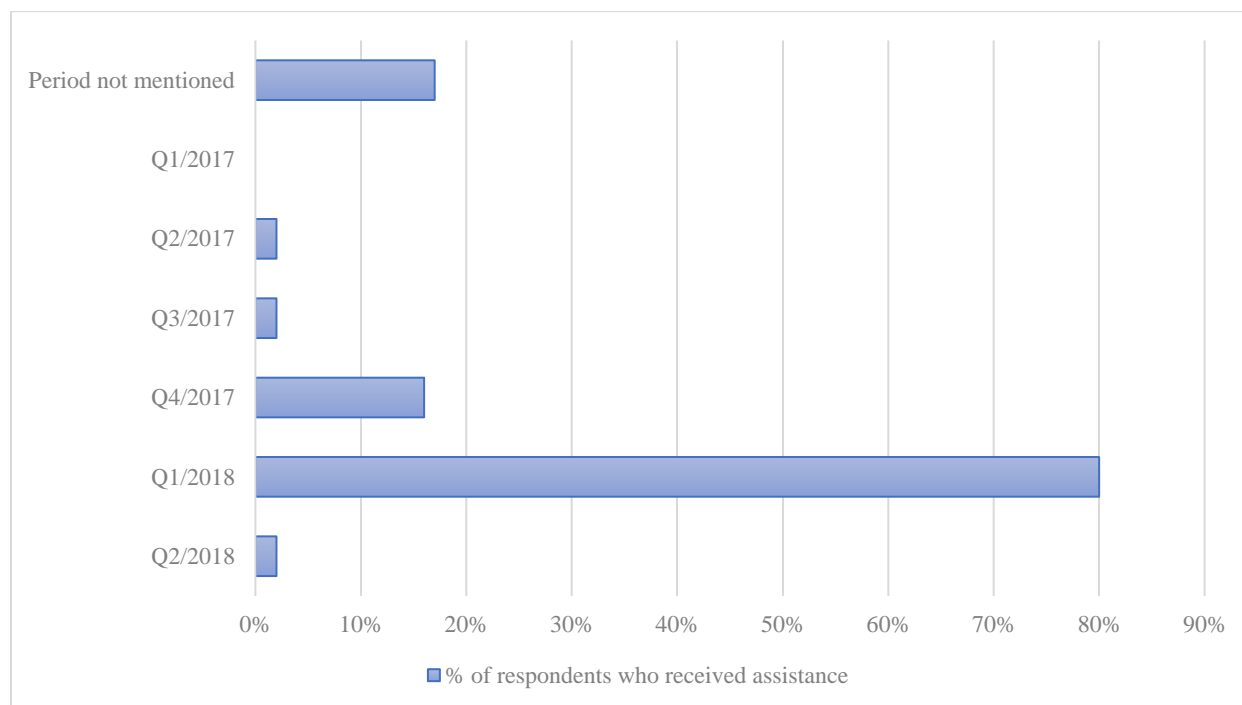
Source: Photographs by Sheikh Mohammed Tu'aiman

3.4 Humanitarian aid

The IDPs in Serwah have received assistance from different local and international NGOs. The support provided to IDPs has been mainly in the form of food aid/baskets, shelter and shelter materials, and health kits. However, according to the interviewees, the aid being received is not constant, delivered late, does not cover their needs, and sometimes the food provided is expired or damaged. Moreover, it was suggested by some interviewees that this kind of support is not sustainable and that they would rather see a more sustainable form of support that makes IDPs less reliant on external assistance. The graph below illustrates how frequently IDPs in Serwah district receive aid.²¹ It has also been noted that there is fatigue and frustration among the IDP community toward relief organizations as a result of their continuous visits to them and collecting their information, but with no noticeable impact on their situation.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 7: Frequency of assistance received by IDPs in Serwah (2017-2018)



While multiple organizations assist IDPs in Serwah, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KS Relief) is considered the main one. Other organizations include UNICEF, International Red Cross, The Emirates Red Crescent (ERC), and Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development. However, the assistance provided by these other organisations in Serwah district is not comparable to KS Relief. Aid is usually delivered by locals such as local organizations, representatives of INGOs and authorities. However, there is local dissatisfaction toward how the aid is being distributed among IDPs, suggesting that there is inequality and favoritism, and a need for enhanced monitoring by the INGOs.

The routes used for aid delivery to Serwah differ depending on the organization/country that provides the aid. Assistance provided by Gulf countries, including aid by KS Relief and ERC, is delivered through Al-Wadiya land port to local authorities or organisations, which is then delivered to targeted districts including Serwah. Other aid agencies such as UNHCR and International Red Cross receive the aid through Hodeidah port, which is then shipped to their warehouses in Sana'a to be distributed to targeted governorates or districts at a later stage.

Local organisations in Marib that distribute aid coming from international aid agencies based in Sana'a have to coordinate with the National Commission for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (الهيئة الوطنية لتنسيق الشؤون الإنسانية), a commission created by the de-facto authorities in Sana'a. Until recently this was called the Executive Unit for the Management of Camps for Displaced Persons (الوحدة التنفيذية لإدارة مخيمات النازحين) in Sana'a. The route used for aid delivery coming from Sana'a was either Sana'a–Al-Jawf–Marib–Serwah or Sana'a–Dhamar–Al-Baydha–Marib–Serwah. The Sana'a–Marib route through Al-Baydha is the most preferred and used compared to the one through Al-Jawf for aid delivery. The Al-Baydha route takes between 20 - 24 hours for big trucks if not stopped or held at any checkpoints. However, if stopped, the trip can take up to

three days to reach Marib. For smaller trucks, it usually takes less time to reach Marib, around 12-13 hours via Al-Baydha.

Delivering aid coming from Sana'a is much more complicated compared to that which arrives via Al-Wadiya land port. Great efforts of collaboration are needed, in addition to the risk of being held at checkpoints. One of the interviewed local originations suggested that the UNHCR logo was causing a problem for them. Soldiers at checkpoints identify the logo and keep obstructing shipments going to Marib and questioning the drivers. A new strategy is currently being used to avoid this challenge. This is done by receiving money instead of in-kind assistance from aid agencies, then purchasing the aid they want to deliver from Sana'a, whether it is food or shelter materials according to the specified criteria. From there, it is the local supplier's responsibility to deliver the shipment to the specified district/area. This strategy releases them from the hassle of checkpoints and the shipments will not have any logos of specific aid agencies. IDPs located under Houthi-controlled areas in Serwah are asked to receive their aid from Habab [31] and Jahana (Sana'a governorate) (حباب و جحانة) because they are considered relatively safe, while IDPs located in areas controlled by the internationally recognized government receive aid directly to their areas.

3.5 Education

There are 427 schools in Marib governorate: 321 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, and 104 for both primary and secondary education.²² Marib is said to have relatively strong education infrastructure compared to other governorates, and it was suggested that one of the main reasons for this is because of disputes among the tribes of Marib. Parents would fear that their kids go to neighbouring villages to attend school where they might be harmed as a result of their disagreements with other tribes. Therefore, building schools was among one of the main requests that was put by the different tribes of Marib to the government. However, most schools offer primary education only.

According to CSSW, the majority of displaced children (88%) in Marib city [11], including displaced children from Serwah, do not have access to education as a result of the long distances between schools in the city and displacement camps; the inability of schools to accommodate all displaced children; and the loss of official education documents (e.g. certificates) in order to be accepted into a school. Moreover, no classrooms or educational tents have been established in IDP camps in Marib city.²³

Figure 8: A classroom in one of the IDP camps in Serwah



Source: CSSW

²² أهم المؤشرات الرئيسية لمحافظة مأرب - المركز الوطني للمعلومات Available at: <https://www.yemen-nic.info/gover/mareb/service/>.

²³ The Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) (2018) الدراسة الميدانية لتقييم الوضع الإنساني للنازحين في محافظة مأرب

As mentioned in section 3.1, the majority of IDPs in Serwah district are concentrated in Al-Rawdah, Al-Sawabeen, and Al-Zor in the Arak sub-district [2]. The IDP community in Al-Rawdah have three rooms used as a school. This school accommodates 50-60 students, and they use two shifts in order to provide education for all displaced students. In Al-Sawabeen, displaced students have six educational tents with no toilet facilities.

The recent field study on Serwah district showed that 66 percent of the displaced families have at least one member of their family in school, while 34 percent of the displaced families do not have any members who go to school or are not at the age of schooling. Among the surveyed families, only 10 percent have a member who is enrolled in a university.²⁴ As expected, it appears at higher age brackets the larger the number of kids who have dropped out of school. Some of the reasons causing children to drop out of school are similar with IDPs in Marib city, including: poverty and the need for kids to work, misalignment between work and school; long travel distances to schools; the risk of airstrikes when in or travelling to school; lack of official educational documents; multiple displacements for some families; and Yemeni traditions.²⁵

Local authorities face numerous challenges in providing education to IDPs as a result of their large numbers. These challenges include the lack of capacity in local schools to accommodate all new students, and therefore students are being overcrowded in classrooms. There is also a shortage in teaching staff, textbooks, school furniture, school uniforms, and supplies. In addition, there is a greater need for more secondary schools in Serwah district and throughout Marib.²⁶ In 2018, the Sub-Tenders Committee in Marib governorate approved the establishment of 120 new classrooms (including caravan and mobile classrooms) as a solution to absorb the continuous increase in IDP numbers. Moreover, there are plans to increase teacher salaries, which could contribute to solving the shortage in staff.²⁷

3.6 Health

Prior to the conflict, Marib governorate was already suffering from poor infrastructure on the health side. In 2005, a survey showed that Marib governorate had 13 hospitals, 12 health centers, and 49 health units that served the fourteen districts of Marib. Currently, the governorate has only one public hospital that operates complex surgeries, *Marib General Hospital Authority* (هيئة مستشفى (مأرب العام), and 5 central hospitals that have moderate operation capabilities (see Table 3). The existing health facilities in Marib are essentially equipped to provide services to the governorate's past population of only around 350,000 inhabitants, but are now serving around 2 million

عجز مدارس مأرب عن استيعاب الطلاب النازحين من مناطق الحوثيين Available at:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/society/2017/10/6/عجز-مدارس-مأرب-عن-استيعاب-الطلاب-النازحين>

²⁴ FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate'. مخرجات الدراسة الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid and عجز مدارس مأرب عن استيعاب الطلاب النازحين من مناطق الحوثيين Available at:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/society/2017/10/6/عجز-مدارس-مأرب-عن-استيعاب-الطلاب-النازحين>

²⁷ مأرب تتصدر كأول محافظة من محافظات الجمهورية اليمنية في هذا الإنجاز المتميز Available at:

https://marebpress.net/news_details.php?sid=141803

inhabitants.²⁸ Moreover, since road traffic in Marib has increased as a result of the population explosion and the increase in travel through Marib to Al-Wadiya land port and Seiyun airport, more road accidents are taking place. Around 40 percent of these accidents are treated in Marib governorate, mainly in Marib Hospital.²⁹

Table 3: Hospitals operating in Marib Governorate

Hospital Name	Location	Notes
Marib General Hospital Authority (هيئة مستشفى مأرب العام)	Marib City	The only hospital in Marib governorate that conducts complex surgeries for the public.
Marib Military hospital (مستشفى مأرب العسكري)	Marib City	Re-opened in 2016, serves wounded fighters only, operates complex surgeries.
Mohammed Otair Charitable Hospital (مستشفى محمد العطير الخيري)	Harib District	Operates with 6 specialists only.
September 26 Hospital (مستشفى 26 سبتمبر)	Al-Jubah District	Operates with 7 specialists only.
Kara General Hospital (مستشفى كرى العام)	Al-Wadi District	Was a health centre. Now Operates with 14 specialists and has 3 operation rooms. It receives patients from the different districts of Marib besides Al-Jawf governorate.
Al-Harib General Hospital (مستشفى حريب العام)	Harib District	Operates with 6 specialists.
Martyr Ahmed Jahza Hospital (مستشفى الشهيد أحمد جزه)	Majzar District	Serves Patients from Marib, Al-Jawf and Sana'a governorates besides Madjal al-Jadaan (مدغل الجدعان) district in Marib.

According to the director general of the Public Health and Population Office in Marib governorate, Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Shaddadi, health organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) do not have a strong presence in Marib governorate, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) only provides medicinal aid to Marib hospital once a month. He said that KS Relief, ERC, and UNICEF are the main providers of health aid to the governorate; and ERC is planning on rehabilitating and activating two hospitals in the governorate. Al-Shaddadi stated that there are currently 535 health facilities and teams including mobile teams that shift between different districts of Marib to provide health services.

²⁸ According to Marib's local council, there are currently 2 million inhabitants in Marib. However, this number was argued and suggestions of exaggerating in numbers in order to get more external aid were proposed.

²⁹ لقاء خاص مع مدير عام مكتب الصحة العامة والسكان بمحافظة مأرب الدكتور عبدالعزيز الشادادي

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yybjjVmXdg>.

Health Facility Viewer, Marib. Available at: http://www.mophp-ye.org/HFV_Marib/english/index_eng.html.

"النزوح مدير صحة مأرب لـ"العين": كارثة صحية وشيكة بسبب "النزوح". Available at: <https://al-ain.com/article/54081>.

مأرب .. مستشفى كرى العام جهود محلية للارتقاء بالخدمات الصحية

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pouNRmHdDRY&feature=youtu.be>.

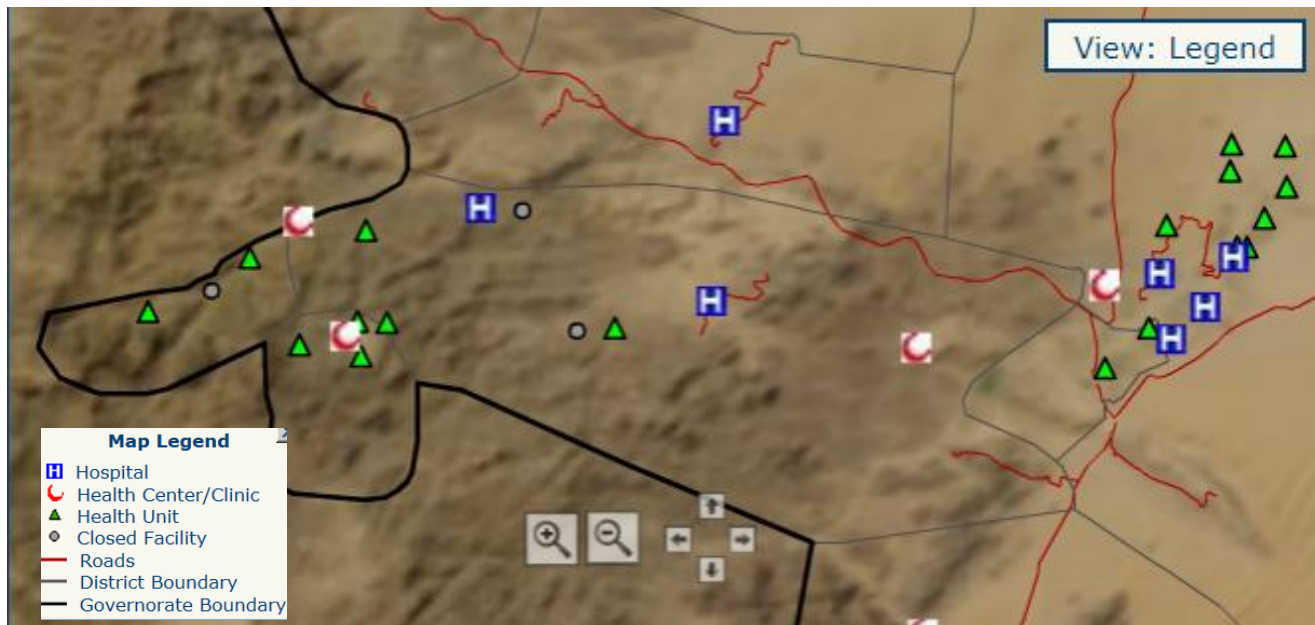
مكتب الصحة بمدينة مأرب يعلن وضع خطة طوارئ خلال اجازة عيد الفطر Available at: http://marib.gov.com/news_details.php?sid=622.

رئيس الأركان يفتتح الأقسام الجديدة في مستشفى الشهيد جزه في مجرز

<https://www.sabanew.net/viewstory/9245>.

According to the 2005 health survey, Serwah district had two hospitals, *Serwah Rural Hospital and Al Mahjazah Rural Hospital*; 1 health clinic; and 2 health units (see figure 9).³⁰ Interviewees suggested that before the conflict, Al-Mahjazah Hospital operated as a small clinic providing first aid only, however it was destroyed during the conflict.³¹ As for Serwah Hospital, it was bombed by airstrikes and ceased operating, in addition to another two health units/clinics.³² Residents of Serwah are therefore required to travel to other districts, sometimes taking hours, in order to seek treatment in hospitals and specialized clinics. There are pharmacies, local doctors, and some health units who offer basic health services. However, not all IDP communities in Serwah have health units. For example, IDPs in Al-Sawabeen and Al-Rawdah in Thanah area (in Arak sub-district [21]) share the same health unit when treatment is needed (see figure 10).

Figure 9: Map of Health centres in Serwah and surrounding areas



The field study on Serwah showed that 94 percent of the surveyed displaced families are not satisfied by the available health services, mainly because of their low quality.³³ Moreover, there are complaints about the lack of free treatment, health guidance, and distribution of mosquito nets to prevent diseases. In addition to this, there is a need for greater treatment and support for those suffering from chronic diseases, critical cases, and those in need of a specialist in mental and neurological disorders. Conditions such as asthma, malaria, cholera, dengue fever, and skin diseases continue to develop among the displaced community, as well as disabilities resulting from

³⁰ Health Facility Viewer, Marib. Available at: http://www.mophp-ye.org/HFV_Marib/english/index_eng.html.

³¹ According to interviewees from Serwah.

³² Serwah Hospital consisted of 18 rooms.

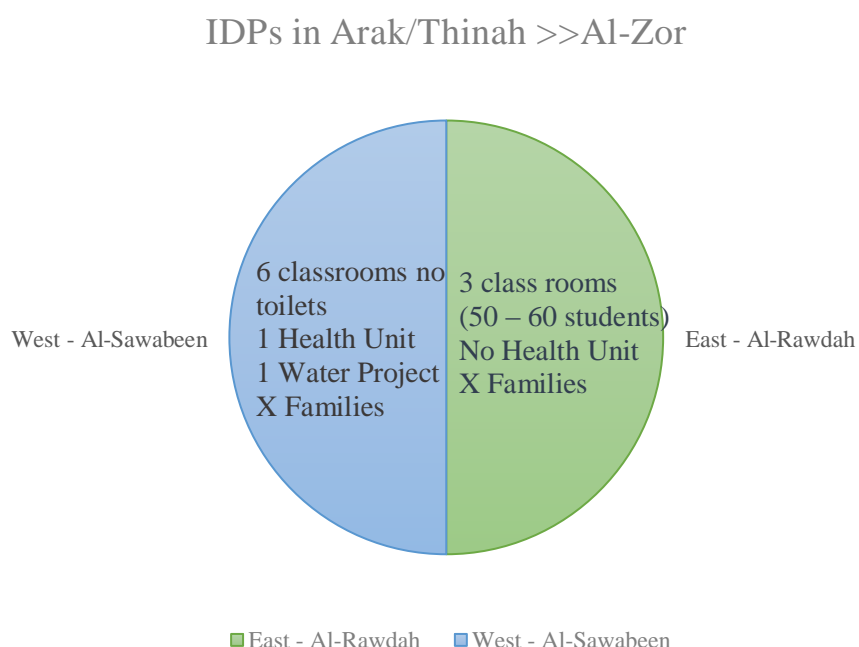
مصادر -يمنية--الطيران-السعودي-يستهدف-مستشفى-صرواح-الريف-في-مأرب. Available at: <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1694258/مصادر-يمنية-الطيران-السعودي-يستهدف-مستشفى-صرواح-الريف-في-مأرب>.

السلطات-المحلية-تعلن-صرواح-مديرية-منكوبة-نتيجة-الغارات-السعودية. Available at: <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1965098/السلطات-المحلية-تعلن-صرواح-مديرية-منكوبة-نتيجة-الغارات-السعودية>.

³³ FSMCD (2018) 'Results of the field study on the needs of IDPs and SCOs in Marib governorate', مخرجات الدراسة، الميدانية عن إحتياجات النازحين و المجتمع المحلي في محافظة مأرب.

the war among children. It is estimated that 28 percent of the displaced population in Serwah does not have access to toilets and therefore defecate in the open. Only 22 percent have private toilets, while most (40 percent) have dedicated places close to where they live that are used as toilets by multiple families. As a result of this, diseases are spread by mosquitoes.

Figure 10: IDPs in Arak/Thinah, Serwah



Part 4: Conclusion

This report has aimed to address one of the gaps in publicly accessible research on the humanitarian impact of the conflict in Yemen at the local level, especially as it relates to internal displacement. The population of Serwah is not as large as other areas of the country that are more frequently featured in news headlines, and like other areas with small populations it is often dropped to the bottom of the priority list for international humanitarian assistance. However, the case of Serwah as presented in this report reflects the extent of the conflict's impact across Yemen's diverse communities, and the need for a more nuanced approach in designing humanitarian, peacebuilding, and stabilization interventions in Yemen.