

## **Rising food prices causing Yemeni families to take desperate measures – UN**

Food insecurity is on the rise in parts of Yemen, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) reported today, adding that families are trying to cope by liquidating their assets, skipping meals and diverting funds from health care and education.

They were taking such desperate measures because the price of fuel in the black market has risen by 500 per cent since January 2011, WFP spokesperson Emilia Casella told a news briefing in Geneva.

She added that the price of bread has increased by 50 per cent, the prices of flour, sugar and milk have risen between 40 and 60 per cent and water prices are also going up – all of which are contributing to a worsening situation for the general population and especially for the most vulnerable people.

WFP is continuing to operate in Yemen despite the ongoing political turmoil, occasional bouts of violence and a lack of fuel. Among its activities, the agency is providing food to tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Aden.

An assessment by WFP found that 90 per cent of the approximately 30,000 IDPs in the city were entirely dependent on the local community for their daily food needs. Moreover, 40 per cent of IDPs who had been interviewed said that food was their most profound need.

Meanwhile, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is renewing its call for all parties in Yemen to protect children from harm, noting that at least 63 children have been killed during the protests that have taken place across the country since mid-February.

“Over 700 children have been wounded, including 130 by live bullets or ammunitions,” Marixie Mercado, the agency's spokesperson in Geneva, told reporters.

“The remaining children were injured during physical violence during the protests and demonstrations and exposure to tear gas. The majority of casualties occurred in Sana'a, Aden and Taize,” she said.

Yemen is one of many countries across North Africa and the Middle East that has witnessed a popular uprising calling for greater democracy and freedoms.