

Letters to the Editor



Plea for enforced ceasefire in Yemen

Sir, We write as development professionals with extensive experience in Yemen and as former senior diplomats with Yemen postings. The extreme fuel shortage caused by current fighting is severely hampering the delivery of food and medicines to a population already suffering from widespread hunger and malnutrition. But lack of fuel is now sowing the seeds of a much greater human disaster.

Fuel is essential to pump drinking water to Yemen's towns and villages, to allow industries to operate and pay their workforces, to drive the irrigation pumps on which most Yemeni agriculture critically depends, to take produce to market and to power the fishing boats operating all along its long coastline. Ensuring fuel availability has become critical for the livelihoods of some 25 million people.

The international community must act immediately to ensure a lasting ceasefire in Yemen and safe passage for fuel and other essentials so that farmers can continue to farm and fishermen to fish. Only this can avoid massive human displacement and suffering in an already fragile region.

JAMES FIREBRACE, former director general, Consumers International;
STEPHEN DAY, former head of the FCO's Middle East department;
FRANCES GUY, British ambassador to Yemen 2001-04; VICTOR HENDERSON British ambassador to Yemen, 1997-2001; PROFESSOR TONY ALLAN, KCL;
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