YEMEN

Child protection situational analysis covering IRG-controlled areas January-June 2026

ABOUT THE REPORT

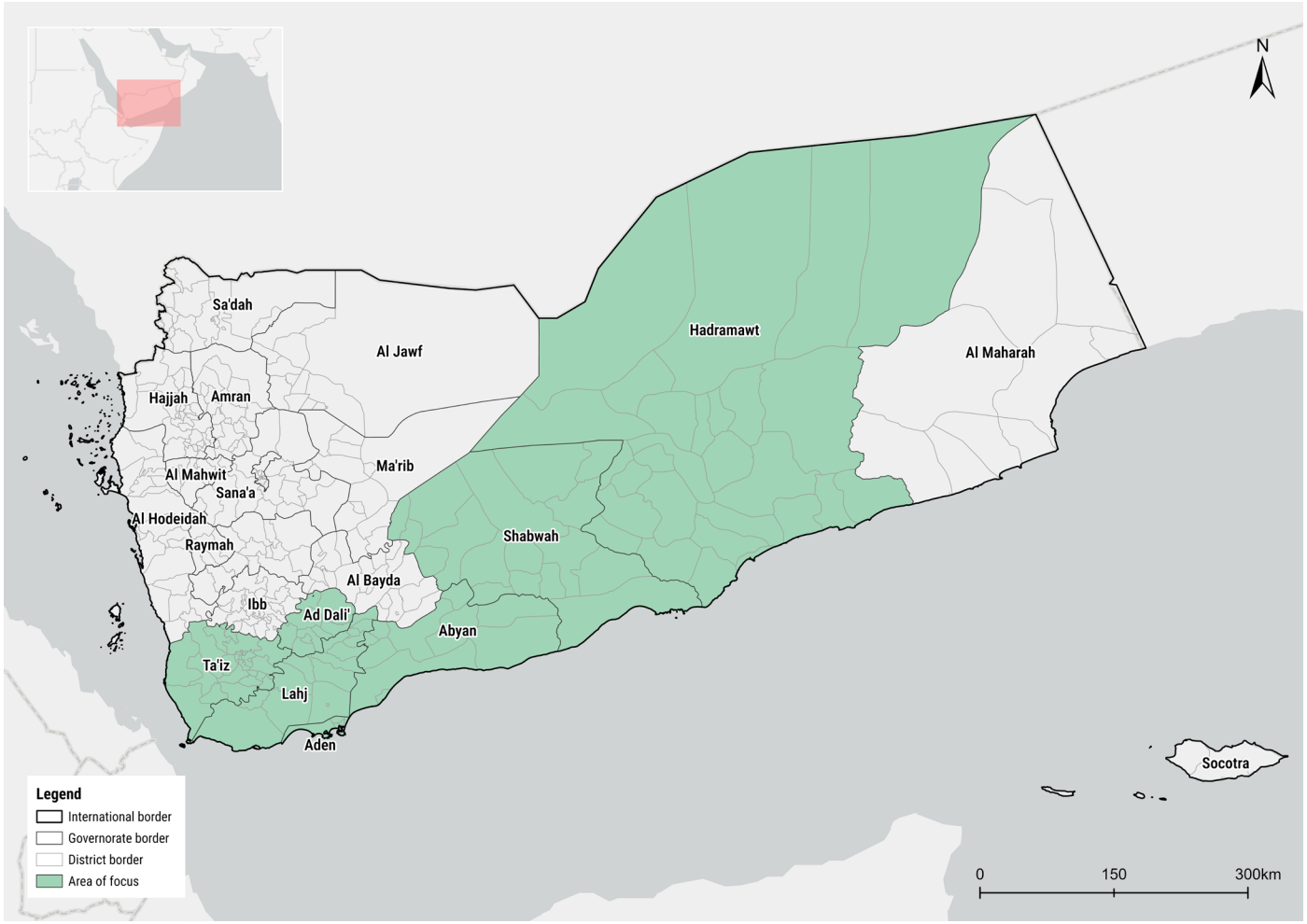
The child protection situational analysis report is a quarterly report produced in collaboration with the Child Protection Working Group. The aim of the report is to provide an overview of the main child protection risks in seven governorates in Internationally Recognised Government of Yemen (IRG)-controlled areas during the reporting period (January–June 2026). The report is based on a review of secondary data, including social media, humanitarian response reports, and child protection operational data, as well as information gathered in focus group discussions (FGDs) across seven governorates with child and other protection responders. For more information on the methodology, see page 10.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Between January–June, the following contextual changes occurred, likely affecting the types, severity, and coverage of child protection risks during this period.

- **Conflict between the IRG and the Southern Transitional Council (STC):** commencing in December 2025, conflict continued throughout January 2026, resulting in the STC's dissolution and formation of a new government cabinet (SCSS 24/04/2026; ACLED 09/02/2026).

Map 1. Governorates of focus: Abyan, Ad Dali', Aden, Hadramawt, Lahj, Shabwah, and Tai'z



Source: ACAPS

This triggered widespread protests across multiple governorates, including Aden, Hadramawt, and Shabwah, resulting in six people killed, 64 injured, and 63 arrested (SCSS 24/04/2026; HRW 17/03/2026). Children were reported among the wounded during clashes between security forces and protesters in Shabwah, when security forces opened fire on a crowd (SCSS 24/04/2026). The deterioration in security conditions and associated displacement likely heightened child protection risks, including psychosocial distress, education disruptions, and reduced access to child protection services (Al Mugtama 19/01/2026).

- **Changing displacement levels:** although there was an 11% countrywide decrease in displacements between January–June, there were several noteworthy periods of displacement (IOM 23/04/2026 and 21/07/2026). January recorded the highest monthly displacement figure of the reporting period, with over 2,950 individuals displaced, largely driven by conflict between the IRG and the STC, with displacements highest in Hadramawt (IOM 23/04/2026). As tensions subsided, new displacements decreased. Ma'rib remained the primary destination for IDPs throughout the reporting period, receiving approximately 60% of IDPs from governorates across Yemen (IOM 23/04/2026 and 21/07/2026). Although displacement data is not disaggregated by age, children likely comprise a significant proportion of IDPs and, as such, are exposed to associated child protection risks, including psychosocial distress, family separation, disrupted education, child labour, child marriage, and recruitment by armed groups. These risks likely remained elevated in areas experiencing continued population movements, particularly Hadramawt, and among households facing long-term displacement.
- **Escalation of the regional war between the US–Israel and Iran and accompanying economic household-level strains:** disruption of supply routes through the Strait of Hormuz drove a 39% average increase in global fuel prices, resulting in the Yemen petroleum company announcing a 24% fuel increase in April. This rise has translated into increased transport costs and food prices and weakened household purchasing power, compounding pre-existing economic deterioration (ACAPS et al. 05/05/2026; STC 21/07/2026). This also comes at a time of increasing food precarity, with the number of people experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or above levels of food insecurity in IRG-controlled areas projected to rise from nearly five million in March–May 2026 to 5.4 million during June–September, affecting around 51% of the population in these areas (IPC 21/05/2026). The increased cost of living, driven in part by the conflict, and heightened food insecurity were frequently cited across all FGDs as main drivers of child exploitation during the reporting period.
- **Continued reductions in funding and service closures:** during the reporting period, funding reductions that have affected Yemen since 2024 continued to limit the scale and coverage of child protection services (ACAPS 08/09/2026; ALNAP 16/06/2026; FTS accessed 19/09/2026; ICVA 07/04/2026). This resulted in programme closures, reductions in dedicated child protection staff, decreased protection monitoring, and cuts to specialised case management services following further funding reductions during the reporting period (ACAPS 08/09/2026). Child protection services decreased in 2025, a pattern that has continued throughout 2026, nearly halving in several IRG-controlled areas, including Ad Dali', Aden, Hadramawt, and Shabwah (ACAPS 08/09/2026; CP AoR accessed 28/09/2026).
- **Continued migration into Yemen, including children:** Yemen remained a key transit and destination country for migrants from the Horn of Africa, with nearly 97,200 arriving between January–June 2026, of whom an estimated nearly 16,900 (approximately 17%) were children under 18 (IOM 08/09/2026). During the second quarter, the suspension of anti-smuggling operations in Abyan contributed to a 43% surge in arrivals in June, mainly in Khanfar district of Abyan governorate (IOM 13/07/2026).

Table 1. Data on child protection risks

CHILD PROTECTION RISK AREA	INDICATORS	DATA	SOURCE AND PUBLICATION DATE	FREQUENCY OF DATA
Danger and injuries	Number of children under 18 recorded in CIMP dataset as killed or injured as a result of violence or accidents	114 (48 fatalities, 66 injuries)	CIMP data covering January–June 2026 Published 30 June 2026	Monthly
	Number of children verified as killed or maimed by parties to the conflict	431 children killed (150) or maimed (281) in 2025 (338 boys, 93 girls)	United Nations Security Council (UNSC 16/06/2026)	Yearly
Physical and emotional maltreatment	Prevalence rate of physical and emotional maltreatment	No comprehensive data available	No data	Not applicable
Gender-based violence	Prevalence of child marriage	30% of girls in Yemen marry before the age of 18 and 7% marry before the age of 15	UNICEF (UNICEF 24/11/2023)	No regular publication
	Prevalence of female genital mutilation	19% among women and girls aged 15–49	Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (UNFPA accessed 20/09/2026)	No regular update identified; last national estimate is based on the 2013 survey
Mental health and psychological distress	Prevalence of mental health and psychological distress	No comprehensive data available	No data	Not applicable
Children associated with armed forces and armed groups	Number of children verified as recruited and used by armed forces and groups	262 children recruited and used in 2025 (259 boys, 3 girls)	United Nations Security Council (UNSC 16/06/2026)	Yearly
Child labour	Percentage of children aged 5–14 estimated to be engaged in child labour across Yemen by gender	12.5% of children across Yemen, with a higher proportion of boys than girls (15.8 % vs. 8.8%)	US Department of Labor (DOL 2024)	Yearly, although last data published in 2024
Unaccompanied and separated children	Number or percentage of unaccompanied and separated children across Yemen	No comprehensive data available	No data	Not applicable

GOVERNORATE-LEVEL INSIGHTS ON CHILD PROTECTION RISKS

The information below summarises the risks discussed by child protection responders in governorate-level FGDs and is complemented by available secondary data, including child protection case management data. This section aims to provide humanitarian responders with insights into potential child protection risks in these locations. Given the limited data, however, this should not be considered a representative overview of child protection risks in each governorate.

Ta'iz

- FGD participants cited child labour as one of the top three child protection risks in Ta'iz. This was reflected in the child protection case management data, with child labour being the most reported protection concern in Ta'iz, accounting for 20% of all reported cases during the reporting period (72.5% of cases involving boys) (CM accessed 05/09/2026). Across urban, rural, and coastal areas, participants reported observing children engaged in street vending, begging, restaurant work, market sales, agriculture, livestock care, water and firewood collection, fishing-related activities, and domestic work. According to participants, although the type of work undertaken by children has not changed since 2025, the reporting period saw an increase in the prevalence of child labour compared to previous years, including a perceived increase in the number of girls engaged in domestic labour. Participants linked these perceived changes to the worsening economic conditions and household difficulties meeting basic needs, a perception that supports findings from an assessment covering three governorate districts,

including in Ta'iz city, which found that households frequently reported sending children to work as an economic coping strategy. The assessment also identified particularly high dropout rates among surveyed school-age children in the two Ta'iz city districts, 37.9% in Salah and 27.9% in Al Mudhaffar. These figures refer to children who had previously enrolled in school but had stopped attending by the time of the assessment, not annual dropout rates. In Salah, the proportion of children who had dropped out exceeded the proportion enrolled, suggesting increased vulnerability to child labour given the established association between school dropout and child labour (STC 27/08/2026). Similar concerns around the engagement of children from economically vulnerable households in labour, including begging, were also reported in secondary data during the reporting period (Yemen Shabab 20/08/2026; Al Ghad TV Youtube 29/08/2026; AJ 16/04/2026).

- Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) also emerged in FGD participants' top three perceived child protection risks during the reporting period. Reflecting secondary data from 2025, participants linked the issue to economic hardship, school dropout, displacement, child labour, and increasing household stress, seen as reducing caregivers' ability to adequately supervise and support children (Al Mahriah 08/09/2025). Participants' concerns about UASC were reflected in child protection case management data for the same period, as UASC represented a notable proportion of reported cases (15% of all reported cases in Ta'iz, 60% boys and 40% girls) (CM accessed 05/09/2026).
- Case management data collected in Ta'iz during the reporting period also highlighted psychological and emotional maltreatment as a critical child protection risk, with 7% of child protection cases categorised as providing support for this issue (CM accessed 05/09/2026). Psychosocial and emotional needs may also extend beyond this particular risk, as children affected by other protection concerns may also experience emotional distress. Participants linked the persistent risk of psychological and emotional maltreatment to several drivers that either remained consistent or were aggravated by contextual changes (cited above) during the reporting period, including household economic vulnerability, conflict, exposure to chid marriage, family or domestic violence, and family separation as a result of displacement.
- Participants also flagged electronic blackmail and online exploitation as risks affecting children in Ta'iz during the reporting period. This reflects a growing concern documented across IRG-controlled areas and Yemen more widely in 2026, as technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) has been identified as an emerging risk (ACAPS 24/08/2026; UNFPA et al. 27/04/2026). While FGD participants indicated that both girls and boys are affected, participants from other governorates highlighted girls as particularly vulnerable to online exploitation, including cyberbullying, online harassment, grooming, and electronic blackmail.

Ad Dali'

- Between January–June 2026, only 28 cases involving 101 children (40 girls, 61 boys) were reported through child protection case management in three of the governorate's districts: Ad Dali', Al Azariq, and Qa'tabah (CM accessed 10/09/2026). The very low caseload is notable given the range and severity of child protection concerns identified by FGD participants, suggesting that the reported figures may only capture a small fraction of children in need of support.
- During the reporting period, deprivation of resources was the most frequently recorded (32%) child protection risk in the (limited) child protection case management data, including denial of access to essential needs and services such as education, healthcare, food, and adequate care. The second-most frequently recorded risk (14%) was domestic and physical violence (under the guise of corporal punishment) (CM accessed 10/09/2026). Domestic violence cases encompass violence within the household, with FGD participants reporting that this violence is primarily perpetrated against children by parents and other caregivers. Prevalent violence and deprivation of resources within the home is consistent with the high levels of multidimensional poverty and limited access to basic services in Ad Dali'; sustained economic pressure on households may increase stress and heighten the risk of violence within the home (MPPN 31/03/2025). In situations in which girls are married as an economic coping strategy, child marriage can compound their exposure to violence within the marital household.
- FGD participants perceived direct danger and injuries from conflict-related incidents or environmental hazards to be among the most prominent child protection risks in Ad Dali' between January–June 2026.[1] Ad Dali' also recorded the second-highest number of civilian casualties among IRG-controlled

1 "Direct danger and injuries" refers to physical harm to children from conflict-related incidents, accidents, or environmental hazards, including explosive remnants of war and landmines, gunfire, road traffic accidents, drowning, and fire-related burns (GPC 01/03/2016).

governorates after Ta'iz in the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) data, which recorded 49 conflict-related civilian casualties during the reporting period, 18 of whom were children, with most (89%) in three districts (Ad Dali', Al Azariq, and Qa'tabah) (CIMP Data accessed 20/09/2026). No danger and injuries cases were reported through child protection case management, suggesting that cases are being identified through health services and, as such, may be missing out on the longer-term holistic care that may be required following traumatic events (CM accessed 10/09/2026). FGD participants also highlighted children's exposure to explosive hazards, especially in Qa'tabah district, while herding livestock, collecting firewood, crossing agricultural areas, and gathering scrap metal. These concerns are consistent with CIMP data, which identified landmines and explosive remnants as among the most frequent causes of child casualties. In a June 2026 incident in Qa'tabah district, an explosive remnant killed five children and injured at least seven others while they were collecting scrap metal (UNICEF 25/06/2026; CIMP accessed 20/09/2026).

- Reflecting the active conflict in Ad Dali', FGD participants observed that the governorate was considered high risk for children, as it is associated with armed forces and armed groups. Between January–June, FGD participants observed children at checkpoints, camps, and on the front lines, particularly adolescent boys, and reported that girls were also involved in support or auxiliary roles, including carrying water, providing logistical assistance, supporting armed groups in other non-combat functions, and, in some cases, forced to marry members of armed groups. Participants perceived risks to be especially high in Qa'tabah district, the northern and western outskirts of which are considered a front line between the IRG and the de-facto authority (DFA) in the north of Yemen (also known as the Houthis). In June 2026, amid tensions, frontline confrontations, and efforts to strengthen social and military readiness in the governorate, authorities and tribal leaders at public rallies in several districts, including Qa'tabah, called for continued mobilisation and preparedness for potential military escalation (26September 19/06/2026). Although there were no reports of children's involvement in the events, FGD participants thought that continued mobilisation, combined with communities' proximity to active front lines, had increased the risks associated with armed forces and armed group presence.
- Mental health and psychological distress emerged as one of the three main child protection risks FGD participants identified for the reporting period. While limited, this is also reflected in the case management data, where this risk accounted for 14% of reported child protection cases in Ad Dali' (78% boys, 22% girls) (CM accessed 10/09/2026). FGD participants linked children's risk of psychological distress to displacement, proximity to active front lines, fear or loss of caregivers, and exposure to conflict-related violence, including danger and injuries, and increasing levels of anxiety, fear, emotional distress, and behavioural difficulties among children and adolescents. This reflects local media reporting that highlighted the importance of mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) for children and adolescents (Al Omana 21/09/2026).

Aden

- Between January–June 2026, only 33 child protection cases involving 125 children (67% boys, 33% girls) were reported across five districts in the governorate. Dar Sa'd district reported 81% of all cases, suggesting uneven access to services across Aden. Deprivation of resources, UASC, and child labour were the most reported concerns, reflecting the continued impacts of displacement and economic hardship on households (CM accessed 10/09/2026). It is important to note that this is a very low number and might not reflect the high level of needs.
- FGD participants discussed a perceived increase in child recruitment during the reporting period, including reports of some households altering birth records to make adolescent boys eligible for recruitment and related financial incentives. Participants linked these practices to insecurity, political instability, economic hardship, and the continued presence of armed groups across Aden following the IRG–STC conflict in early 2026 (AJ 04/01/2026). Neither FGD discussions nor available reporting attributed recruitment to a specific armed group or party: participants referred to recruitment by armed groups in general terms, with the perpetrator or perpetrators remaining unidentified. Although this perceived increase could not be independently verified, a month and a half after the reporting period, local media covered protests by women in Aden alleging the recruitment of their sons (Hodhod 18/08/2026). The source did not specify which group was allegedly recruiting.

- FGD participants identified child marriage as a continuing form of violence and exploitation in Aden, particularly affecting girls from economically vulnerable households. A local report published a few weeks after the reporting period also linked worsening economic conditions to harmful marriage practices, including a perceived increase – with instances in several governorates, including Aden – in so-called "visa marriages," when girls are married to older foreign men through brokerage networks (Khabar 22/07/2026).
- FGD participants reported that barriers to obtaining birth certificates and other civil documentation remained a challenge, limiting children's access to education, essential services, and legal identity, especially those from displaced households, families with irregular legal status, and with foreign fathers. These concerns are consistent with reported documentation challenges across IRG-controlled areas last year, where lack of civil documentation consistently restricted access to rights, services, and assistance (UNFPA et al. 30/10/2025).

Lahj

- Between January–June 2026, only 13 cases involving 57 children (77% boys, 23% girls) were reported through child protection case management in two of the governorate's districts, Al Hawtah and Tuban, indicating very limited access to these services (CM accessed 10/09/2026). Cases related primarily to the deprivation of resources, opportunities, and services alongside direct danger and injuries resulting from conflict-related incidents and environmental hazards, including explosive remnants of war, road traffic accidents, and fire-related burns.
- Mirroring the child protection case management data, FGD participants in Lahj emphasised deprivation of resources and limited access to services as among the main child protection risks observed during the reporting period. Participants highlighted difficulties obtaining birth certificates, particularly among displaced households and the Al Muhamasheen community, stemming from undocumented marriages, missing supporting documents, and the high cost and distance associated with accessing civil registration services. Participants noted particularly pronounced risks in Tuban district, which hosts around half of the governorate's estimated 66,910 IDPs (OCHA 2026). In Al Musaymir district, a media report published a week and a half after the end of the reporting period also noted that prolonged drought and insecurity near active front lines had forced women and children to travel long distances to collect water, limiting their access to basic services and increasing their exposure to protection risks, such as harassment and sexual violence during water collection, particularly for women and girls (Khabar 10/07/2026).
- Direct danger and injuries related to conflict and environmental hazards involved 17 children (11 boys, 6 girls), identified through child protection case management data, during the reporting period (CM accessed 10/09/2026). When reflecting on children's exposure to direct danger and injuries, FGD participants noted that these tended to arise from road traffic accidents and environmental hazards, including encounters with wild animals, rather than direct conflict-related violence. These findings align with local reporting that identified Lahj as a road traffic accident hotspot during the first half of 2026, although age-specific data was unavailable, and CIMP data reported only one incident during the reporting period directly related to conflict, involving a child injured by shelling in May 2026 (CIMP accessed 20/09/2026; Yemen Online 11/07/2026).

Abyan

- Between January–June 2026, 34 child protection cases involving 179 children (61% boys, 39% girls) were reported through case management in Abyan across three districts (Khanfar, Lawdar, and Zinjibar), with Khanfar accounting for almost half of all reported cases (CM accessed 13/09/2026). FGD participants and the limited child protection case management data indicated that child labour had been a notable protection risk in Abyan during the reporting period, increasing children's exposure to exploitation and other protection risks. FGD participants linked such exposure to a perceived worsening in economic conditions, unemployment, and reduced humanitarian assistance, noting that many households increasingly rely on children's income to meet basic needs. Food security was also cited by participants as a driver, reflecting IPC data indicating that, between March–May 2026, an estimated 35% of the analysed population was experiencing IPC 3 conditions and 13% were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) during the reporting period (IPC 21/05/2026). Participants framed child labour as a protection risk underpinned by competing priorities, with children often attempting to balance education and work. Poor access to adequately resourced educational facilities and the growing burden of livelihood responsibilities make it difficult, however, to sustain both.

- FGD participants highlighted child protection risks linked to children's irregular migration from horn of Africa. Between January–June 2026, nearly 44,900 migrants arrived in Abyan – including an estimated 1,976 children (484 girls, 1,492 boys) – from the Horn of Africa, primarily through coastal entry points in Ahwar and Khanfar districts (IOM 08/09/2026). FGD participants reported that migrant children encountered during the reporting period were often under 18 years old and lacked adequate family support. When reflecting on the protection risks affecting migrant children, participants noted that such children often lack safe accommodation, sleep in open areas, and continue their onward movement. Participants had also heard reports of migrant children being taken from arrival points by unknown groups shortly after arriving. Although unverified, these reports coincide with several secondary and media reports identifying migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks operating within Abyan, including holding migrants for ransom and selling them to traffickers for exploitation (Khabar 04/2026; Al Montasaf 04/2026; IOM 13/07/2026).

Shabwah

- Between January–June 2026, only five child protection cases involving seven children (one girl, six boys) were reported through case management in Shabwah, with all cases involving migrant children (CM accessed 13/09/2026). FGD participants offered possible explanations for the absence of non-migrant cases: child protection services in the governorate are extremely limited relative to needs; remote and inaccessible communities face significant access barriers, including long distances, poor roads, and transport costs; and families are often reluctant to report protection concerns, including abuse against children, because of shame, fear of stigma and social repercussions, and a preference for resolving such matters informally within the family or community rather than through formal services. Given the small number of cases, this figure should be interpreted with caution, as case management data reflects organisational presence and reporting capacity rather than the scale of protection concerns in the governorate.
- FGD participants identified migrant children and UASC as among the groups most vulnerable to protection risks in Shabwah, which remained a key transit corridor for migrants moving inland toward central and northern governorates. Between January–June 2026, nearly 24,900 migrants from horn of Africa arrived through the governorate, including over 7,900 children (more than 5,300 boys, nearly 2,600 girls), primarily through coastal landing areas in Radum district (IOM 08/09/2026). Alongside facing risks of abuse and exploitation during transit, participants also described cases in which children who became sick, injured, or exhausted were left behind by travelling groups that continued onward. Children left behind in this way lose the protection of their travelling group and are alone in unfamiliar and insecure locations, where they face serious risks of harm, including abandonment, exploitation, and abduction. These concerns are consistent with reports that migrants, including children, are being detained for ransom by smugglers and traffickers in holding sites in remote areas of the governorate or deceived and sold to traffickers for the purpose of exploitation. Such reports, however, have not specifically identified children or left-behind children among those affected (IOM 13/07/2026).

Hadramawt

- No child protection case management data was recorded in Hadramawt during the reporting period, limiting the ability to use case management data to ascertain which children are accessing support for what types of case (CM accessed 10/09/2026). This may reflect reduced service availability, changes in organisational presence, or challenges in reporting rather than an absence of child protection concerns. Activities in the governorate fell from seven districts covered by four national NGOs in 2025 to three districts covered by a single national NGO in 2026, with only community-based MHPSS and minimal individual MHPSS reported and no case management services delivered (CP AoR accessed 29/09/2026). The governorate's operating environment, including political instability, protests, arrests, and displacement pressures during the reporting period, may further complicate reporting and access; however, neither FGD discussions nor available sources established a direct link between these events and the absence of case management data. What participants did describe points to underreporting dynamics that operate independent of any single event: many incidents, particularly sexual violence and family violence, remain hidden because of stigma, fear of social consequences, and families' reluctance to report, with many cases resolved informally within families or communities to avoid reputational damage.

- FGD participants identified gender-based violence (GBV) as the most prominent child protection concern in Hadramawt during the reporting period, particularly affecting girls, including child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, both of which remain prevalent in Hadramawt and may increase girls' vulnerability to different forms of GBV (28 Too Many 09/2020; UNFPA accessed 20/09/2026; UNICEF 07/02/2023).. Participants also perceived an increase in cases of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and other forms of GBV affecting children and adolescents during the reporting period, although no data was available to verify whether these had increased over time. Participants also reported cases of incest involving child survivors (ACAPS 24/08/2026).
- Reflecting a recently published assessment that emphasised the growing risk of TFGBV in Yemen, FGD participants in Hadramawt also flagged electronic blackmail and online sexual exploitation as a protection risk affecting children, particularly adolescent girls (ACAPS 24/08/2026). Participants described TFGBV as one of the fastest-growing protection risks in the governorate, having observed cases in which perpetrators created fake online identities, including accounts posing as girls, to befriend both boys and girls, gain their trust, and persuade them to share personal information or photographs. Material gathered in this way is then used for coercion and extortion, including demands for money. In cases involving girls, participants reported that victims were sometimes pressured to bring other girls into contact with the perpetrators, turning girls into unwitting instruments of further abuse against their peers. Participants did not indicate whether boys or girls are targeted more frequently; the accounts suggest both are targeted through fabricated identities, while the reported coercion-to-recruit dynamic primarily involves girls. This cycle of silence allows perpetrators to continue offending and means the true scale of online exploitation remains largely unknown.

CAPACITIES

Child protection service coverage showed a slight reduction in the first half of 2026 compared with 2025 and remained substantially below levels observed in 2024 (FTS accessed 18/09/2026; ACAPS 08/09/2026). Between January–June 2026, Child Protection Working Group partners reported activities in IRG-controlled areas in 11 governorates and 56 districts, compared with 11 governorates and 85 districts during the same period in 2025 (CP AoR accessed 20/09/2026). While the reduction in geographic coverage appears limited at the national level, these figures should be interpreted with caution, as 5W data reflects the presence of reported activities rather than the availability, quality, accessibility, or use of services. More detailed analysis is required to assess the impact of these changes on children's access to child protection and related services.

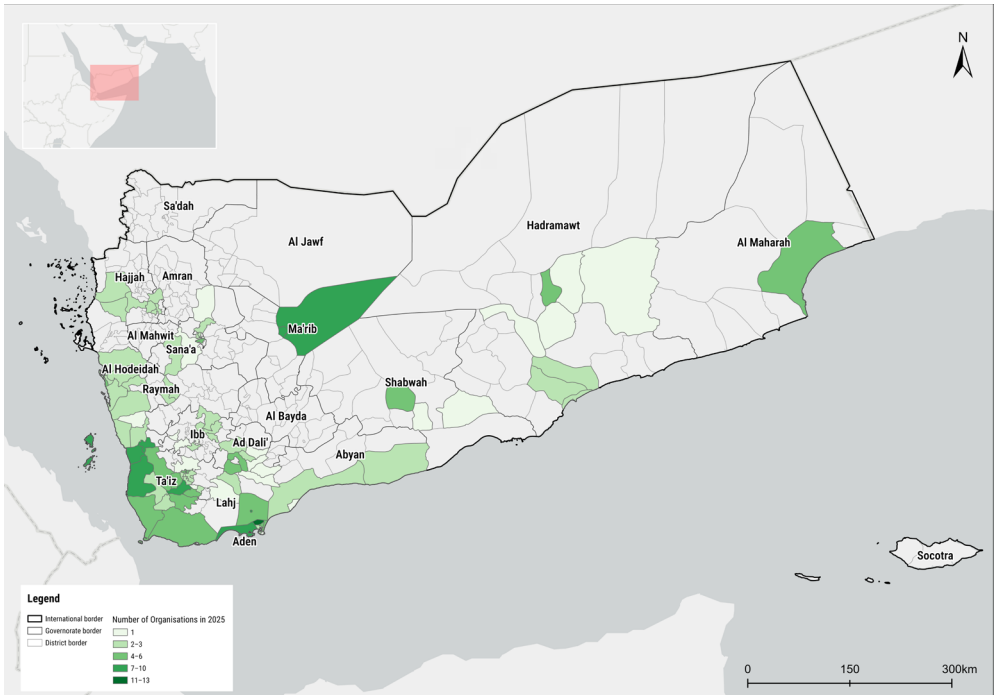
Available evidence still points to a continuing reduction in child protection capacity across Yemen since 2024. Funding reductions – from USD 124 million in 2024, to USD 58 million in 2025, to USD 52 million in 2026 by September – and subsequent programme closures, coupled with shrinking operational space and restrictions on protection activities, have contributed to a reduction in specialised child protection programming, protection monitoring, and information management capacity (ACAPS 08/09/2026 and 07/05/2026).

FGD participants' observations were consistent with these trends. Community protection committees and local networks were identified as a key remaining capacity, serving as the first point of contact for children and facilitating referrals where formal services are limited.[2] Participants in Ta'iz cited a community-based prevention initiative in Salah district as an example of community-driven change to prevent child marriage. The initiative brought together religious leaders and community representatives to develop community agreements under which marriages would only proceed when proof of age confirmed the girl was at least 18. Participants reported that the initiative contributed to changed attitudes and strengthened community dialogue around child marriage, although they noted that some families arrange marriages in districts where no such agreement is in place, highlighting the limits of isolated community-level interventions without cross-district enforcement and coordination.

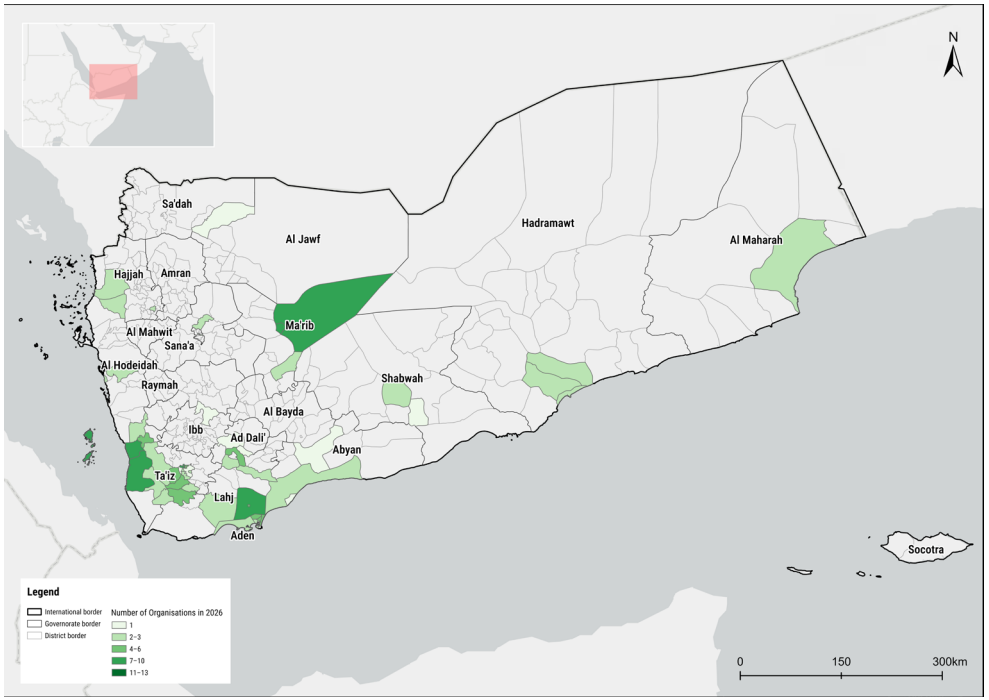
Participants consistently emphasised that available services fall short of the scale of need. The most frequently cited gaps were the absence of safe alternative care and shelter options for children exposed to violence, neglect, or family breakdown, and restricted access to child protection, GBV, and MHPSS services in remote and inaccessible communities, where distance and transport costs limit uptake.

2 Community protection committees are groups of community volunteers who help sustain children's safety and protection within the community. Such committees are typically composed of residents, including teachers and religious leaders, rather than salaried protection staff, and their remit is community-level prevention and identification, raising awareness of protection risks, monitoring concerns, and referring at-risk children to formal services where these exist (ACAPS 08/09/2026).

MAP 2. CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITIES 2025 AND 2026



Child protection activity prevalence 2025
Source (CP 5W, accessed 20/09/2026).



Child protection activity prevalence 2026
Source (CP 5W, accessed 20/09/2026).

EMERGING RISKS IN Q3 OF 2026

The information below emerged while this report was being drafted. The incidents are being closely monitored, as they show potential implications for child protection risks and service delivery in future reporting periods.

- **Increased recruitment and use of children by armed groups:** since August 2026, fighting between the IRG and DFA has escalated across front lines in Ad Dali', southern Al Hodeidah, Ma'rib, and western Ta'iz (AJ 08/09/2026; ICTJ 09/08/2026). Current reports indicate child recruitment has increased since August, and children are being captured across multiple front lines by armed forces in different areas of control (AJ 08/09/2026). The expansion of active hostilities, combined with economic hardship, displacement, and school disruption, may increase the risk of recruitment and use of both boys and girls by armed groups in conflict-affected areas
- **Increased risk of family separation and unaccompanied and separated children:** renewed fighting between IRG-aligned forces and the DFA has displaced more than 57,000 children across Al Hodeidah, Ma'rib, and Ta'iz (UN News 17/09/2026). Continued displacement and disruption of family support networks may increase the risk of family separation and the number of unaccompanied and separated children.
- **Child casualties and conflict related injuries:** escalating hostilities since August 2026 have significantly increased children's exposure to conflict-related harm. Between 1 August and 9 September 2026, at least 19 children were killed and 49 injured, including 43 child casualties recorded during the week of 3–9 September alone (STC 15/09/2026). Continued fighting may increase children's exposure to shelling, explosive ordnance, unexploded remnants of war, and other forms of armed violence, particularly in newly affected conflict areas and locations experiencing population movements.

METHODOLOGY

This analysis is based on the triangulation of information collected through FGDs and a review of secondary data, including case management data and civilian impact monitoring. The report is not intended to provide representative estimates of child protection risks, but instead to identify contextual changes, priorities, or changing child protection risks across IRG-controlled areas.

- Seven FGDs of approximately 90 minutes were conducted between July–September 2026 covering Abyan, Ad Dali', Aden, Hadramawt, Lahj, Shabwah, and Ta'iz. Participants were selected purposively and consisted of active child protection responders, including case managers, child protection project staff, psychosocial support practitioners, and other protection specialists with direct operational experience in the target governorates. As a result of insecurity and operational constraints, FGDs could not be conducted in Ma'rib or the west coast during the reporting period.
- Secondary data review: during the reporting period, a review of humanitarian reports, assessments, and incident monitoring published during or shortly after the reporting period was conducted to identify contextual developments and events that may have directly or indirectly increased children's exposure to protection risks. This included reviewing information on conflict dynamics, displacement, service availability, and other developments relevant to child protection. Aggregate child protection case management data reported during the reporting period was also analysed.

LIMITATIONS

- Significant information gaps remain across Yemen, particularly in areas affected by access constraints and a reduced humanitarian presence, such as Abyan, Hadramawt, and Shabwah. As such, this analysis relies heavily on available secondary data and the perceptions of a limited number of protection responders, limiting triangulation.
- Participants presented their observations rather than systematically collected data in the FGDs. While all participants had consistent interactions with children during the reporting period, FGD findings should be considered indicative rather than representative of governorate-wide child protection risks.
- Many child protection incidents remain underreported because of stigma, fear of retaliation, social norms, and limited availability of specialised services. These factors likely result in an underestimation of the scale of protection concerns affecting children.
- As case management data reflects only incidents identified by and reported to service providers, it should not be interpreted as representative of the prevalence of specific child protection risks. Variations in service availability, access constraints, referral pathways, reporting practices, and community acceptance can significantly influence the number and type of cases reported.