

Social impact monitoring report: October - December 2021

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES CAUSING NEGATIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS

A review of the data reveals that prolonged conflict, decreasing purchasing power, and shrinking civic space were key drivers of humanitarian needs in October–December 2021. These factors affected everyone to a degree, but they were more acutely felt by specific categories of people. Such categories include IDPs, public sector employees, people with limited financial resources, women, children, fisherfolk, and journalists. Nonetheless, there were others who experienced some improvements in their conditions; Yemeni migrants were able to adhere to COVID-19 travel requirements by Saudi Arabia, while African migrants were able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (IOM 15/12/2021).

In October–December, spikes in conflict were observed, mainly in Al Hodeidah, Al Jawf, Marib, and Shabwah, between the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) and the de-facto authority (DFA) in the north of Yemen (also known as the Houthis) (CIMP data accessed 10/01/2022; ACLED accessed 24/01/2022). During this period, over 69,000 people were displaced because of conflict – 64% of them within Marib governorate (IOM accessed 12/01/2022). In southern Al Hodeidah, a stretch of the main commercial road used to transport goods north from Aden remains closed because of shifting frontlines. This closure will likely raise food prices as a result of increased transportation costs caused by rough terrain and checkpoints (FEWS NET 06/01/2022).

During this period, civil unrest continued but at a lower level than previous months, particularly when compared to the surge of protests in September 2021 (ACLED accessed 24/01/2022). The situation calmed down significantly in December, mainly following the appreciation of the Yemeni rial (YER) in IRG areas resulting from changes in senior management and directors at the Aden branch of the Central Bank of Yemen. As at 27 December 2021, the local currency had appreciated to YER 800 per USD 1 (FEWS NET 06/01/2022; YETI accessed 10/01/2022). While this provided some relief to struggling households, reduced purchasing power remains a significant issue. Households continue to feel the impact of the local currency depreciation between August–November 2021 and the related adjustments made to household budgets.

Religious repression and a shrinking civic space continue to impact lives and wellbeing, particularly for women, girls, and journalists. While reported COVID19 cases have decreased in IRG areas since the peak of the third wave in September, underreporting remains a concern given the limited testing capacity in most parts of the country and the general absence of reporting in DFA areas.

This edition of the Social Impact Monitoring Report (October–December) highlights two themes:

- spikes in conflict on the west coast and in Marib and its associated impacts on people
- decreasing purchasing power across Yemen

*This edition of the Social Impact Monitoring Report also includes stories from Yemeni people living in Aden, Taiz, and Hadramawt on the topic of purchasing power. These stories were collected through Yemeni contacts to attempt to show how the events, policy decisions, and economic changes seen in the core data set are felt at the individual and household levels. People spoke to ACAPS voluntarily, and their names have been changed to protect their identities (marked with * throughout the report). Interviews were carried out by phone in Arabic and translated into English. The exchange rate used is YER 1,200 per USD 1 as at 10 January 2022 (marked with ** throughout the report).*

About the report

The Social Impact Monitoring Report aims to develop better insights on the vulnerability of people to social and economic factors in Yemen and the impact these factors may have. The issues and themes selected are the ones that emerged from daily monitoring during the reporting period. They are chosen based on the significance of their impact (or potential impact) on people as already observed and through time. This report is produced approximately every two months to support changes in understanding identified over time.

Methodology

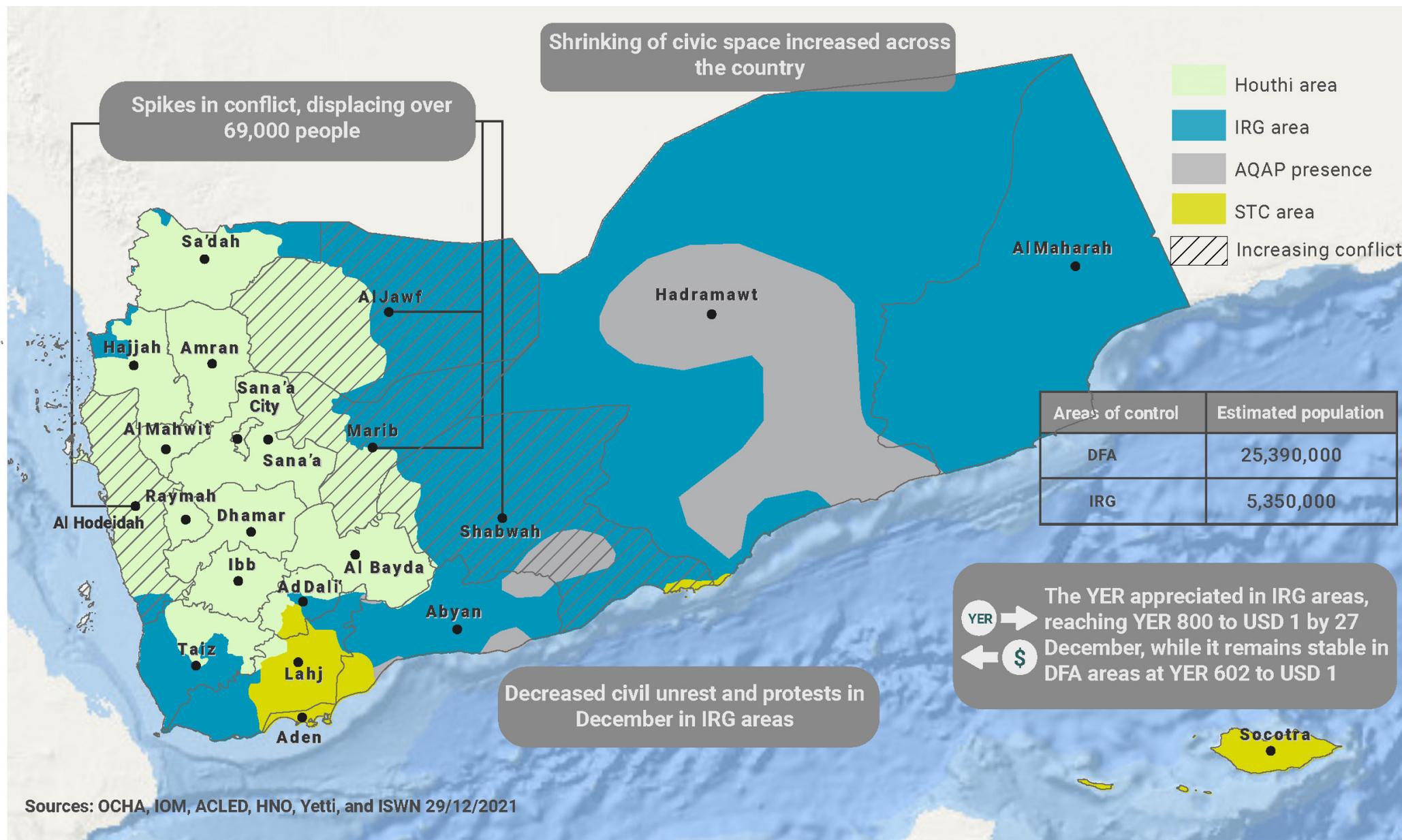
The analysis presented in this report is based on:

- the daily monitoring of relevant indicators logged in the ACAPS qualitative database
- the analysis of data from ACAPS' core dataset
- secondary data review of documents published in and on Yemen
- joint analysis sessions involving the Yemen Analysis Hub team and partners on select themes to focus on and observe
- key informant interviews with operational actors (Yemeni nationals) from local and international organisations to cross-check ground truth findings and assumptions and fill information gaps
- the collection of small case studies through interviews to capture the impressions and experiences of people living in Yemen.

Limitations

There is limited information available, specifically related to impacts on vulnerable groups. The nature of available information, which is mainly qualitative, also makes it difficult to compare and aggregate data, especially on a continuous and country-wide basis. Given these limitations, ACAPS has confidence that the approach being used to monitor the indicators and the integrated analysis of their meaning provide a structured way of improving the understanding of social impact and vulnerability within the constraints.

Key humanitarian developments between October-December



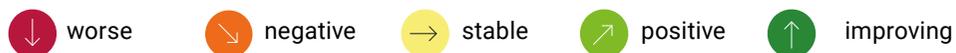
Vulnerable groups and categories particularly impacted, October–December 2021

ISSUES AND THEMES EMERGING FROM QUALITATIVE DATA MONITORING	GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	VULNERABLE GROUPS/CATEGORIES PARTICULARLY IMPACTED													
		Internally displaced people (IDPs)	Yemeni migrants and their families (supported by remittances)	Primary producers (agriculture and fishery)	Northerners living in the south	Migrants living in the south	Prisoners and detained people	Marginalised ethnic, tribal and religious groups (Al Muhamsheen, Al Mazayna, Jews, Christians and Bahais)	People with disabilities, the elderly and the chronically ill	Men (unemployed, without access to livelihood)	Women (unemployed, without access to livelihood)	Widows and female-headed households	Pregnant and lactating women/girls	Children (girls and boys)	
Increased conflict	Marib and Al Hodeidah						Info gap	Info gap							
Reduced purchasing power	Nationwide														
COVID-19 situation	Nationwide, but the DFA-controlled areas are potentially impacted the most, and where information is the most limited	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	
Vaccine rollout	Nationwide but the DFA-controlled areas are potentially impacted the most, and where vaccine rollout is limited to health and aid workers	Info gap		Info gap	Info gap		Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	Info gap	
Religious repression	DFA-controlled areas	Info gap	Info gap		Info gap	Info gap	Info gap								
Fuel crisis (current)	Nationwide														
Seasonal rain (between April-October)	Nationwide, however the most affected governorates are Marib, Al Hodeidah, and Hajjah														
Shrinking civic space	Nationwide but the DFA-controlled areas are potentially impacted the most														
Civil unrest	IRG-controlled areas														

This table is based on qualitative monitoring. Key information:

Very negative	Negative	Somewhat negative	No impact	Somewhat positive	Positive	Very positive	Information gap	Not applicable or no specific impact

Description of trends:



↓ Al Hodeidah and the west coast: prolonged conflict affecting IDPs, fisherfolk, women, and children

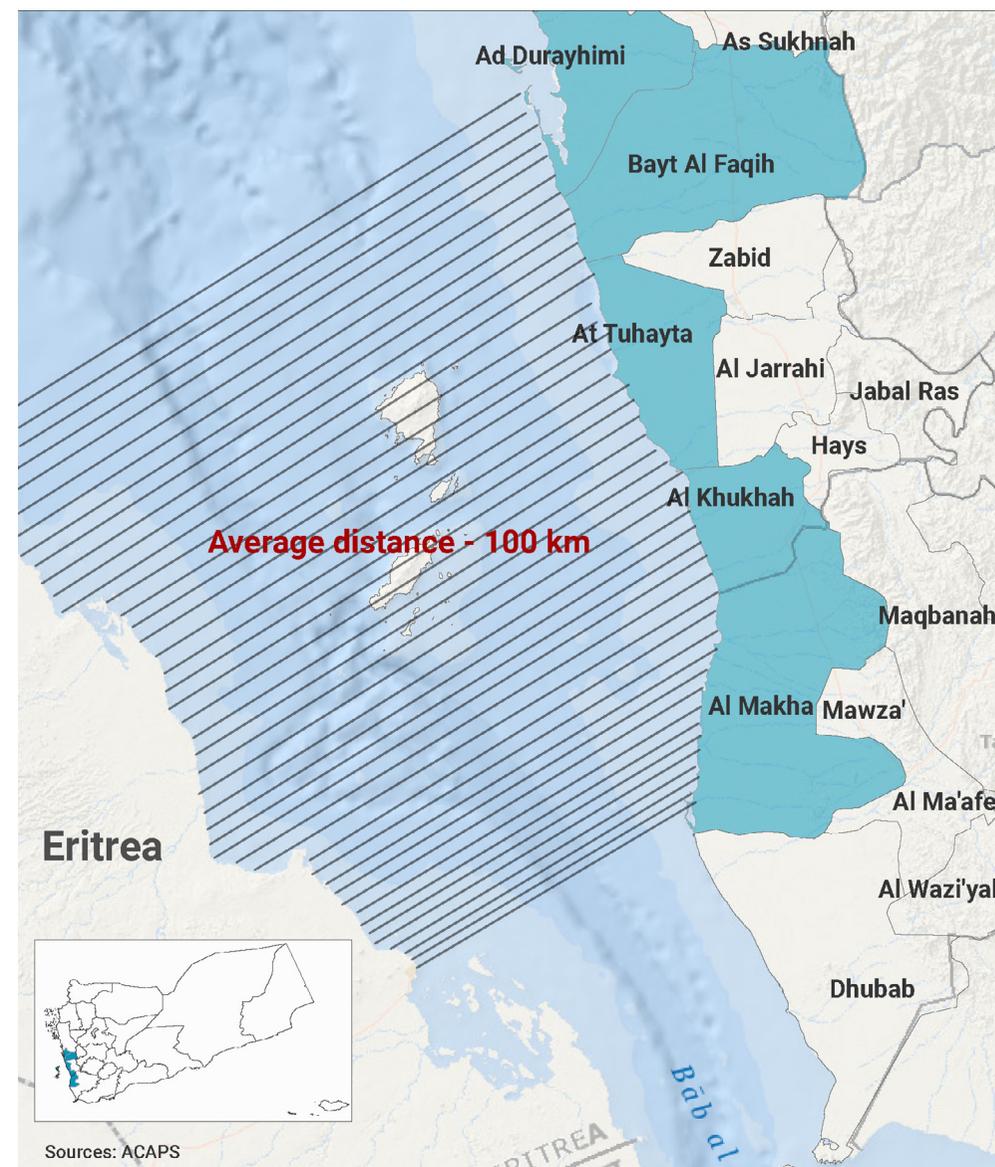
Yemen's west coast is inhabited by many IDPs living in inadequate conditions and with limited access to humanitarian assistance as a result of large-scale displacement earlier in the war (in 2017–2018). As at 30 December 2021, over 140,300 IDPs lived in 84 displacement sites, with new displacements occurring because of active fighting across frontlines (REACH accessed 10/01/2022). The pressure of limited resources is causing tension between IDPs and host communities.

In November, forces aligned with the IRG on the west coast vacated their positions in Ad Durayhimi, Bayt Al Faqih, and most of At Tuhayta district to redeploy to the Al Haymah area north of Al Khukhah. These redeployments and changes in frontlines displaced over 14,400 people towards Al Hodeidah city, Al Khukhah, and Al Makha (OCHA 11/01/2021; IOM accessed 12/01/2022).

As new IDPs move towards Al Khukhah and Al Makha, limited resources have become a source of tension. Most of the host population in Al Khukhah and Al Makha is considered poor. Healthcare, education, and other public services have been of low quality and insufficient for the population – even before the war. Over the years, the challenges faced by local authorities in trying to provide these services have increased, and relevant conditions have worsened (KII 07/12/2021).

In this environment, continuous displacement into these areas has made people from other districts or governorates unwelcome, as community members see them as competitors over limited resources. For example, host communities have begun discriminating in relation to who works in fisheries or agriculture. If they do allow IDPs to work, it is only in return for in-kind compensation, such as fish or a small income (lower than the income of workers from the host community). In addition to tensions with IDPs, there is also a reported increase in bribery and violent attitudes towards other people in the same community, sometimes even towards humanitarian organisations. Observers indicate that this is presenting a marked change in social dynamics in general (KII 07/12/2021; KII 10/01/2022).

Approximate distance between Yemen west coast and Eritrea - Fishery and livelihood



The prolonged conflict on the west coast has turned once peaceful areas into a military zone, affecting social structures and livelihoods. The coastal areas have been in an active frontline since 2017, changing the nature of these districts from peaceful and productive fishery and agricultural areas into a military zone. Over time, this has destabilised all aspects of life for the residents. Households who were dependent on fisheries for their livelihoods in particular have faced serious challenges:

- Damages to the fishing habitat on the west coast because of landmines, shelling, and airstrikes (KII 07/12/2021).
- Restrictions and limitations by authorities in fishing by the shores. As a result, a few people fish along the Eritrean shores, but this is costly (approximately SAR 40,000 or USD 10,000) and limited to those who can afford it, such as traders (KII 07/12/2021). Fishing along the Eritrean shores is risky, and there have been several incidents of fisherfolk being detained by Eritrean authorities or targeted by shelling or airstrikes. Around 18 fishermen were detained in 2021 (Mwatana 06/01/2022).
- Many people, especially those who fled from Ad Durayhimi, At Tuhayta, and Bayt Al Faqih, lost their fishing equipment while fleeing their homes and can no longer return to their profession.

As long as conflict continues in these areas, the issues outlined will persist and potentially worsen, especially given the strain of increased displacement and the worsening needs of both IDPs and host communities. Communities will likely become further fractured. The divisions between groups are likely to increase as they compete over inadequate resources and experience challenges that cannot be addressed. This situation will create more vulnerability in a region that was already poor to begin with. It will also further change the nature and structure of these areas in ways that may have lasting impacts.

Marib governorate: intensifying conflict increasing vulnerability and tensions over limited resources and services

Conflict escalated in October–December, displacing over 44,000 people from Al Jubah, Harib, Jabal Murad, Rahabah, and Sirwah districts, mostly towards Marib Al Wadi (IOM accessed 12/01/2022). The increasing conflict and continuous displacement of IDPs from one district to another have led to overcrowding in displacement sites. The situation has also increased humanitarian needs and created new vulnerabilities in the host communities, causing of tension over limited resources.

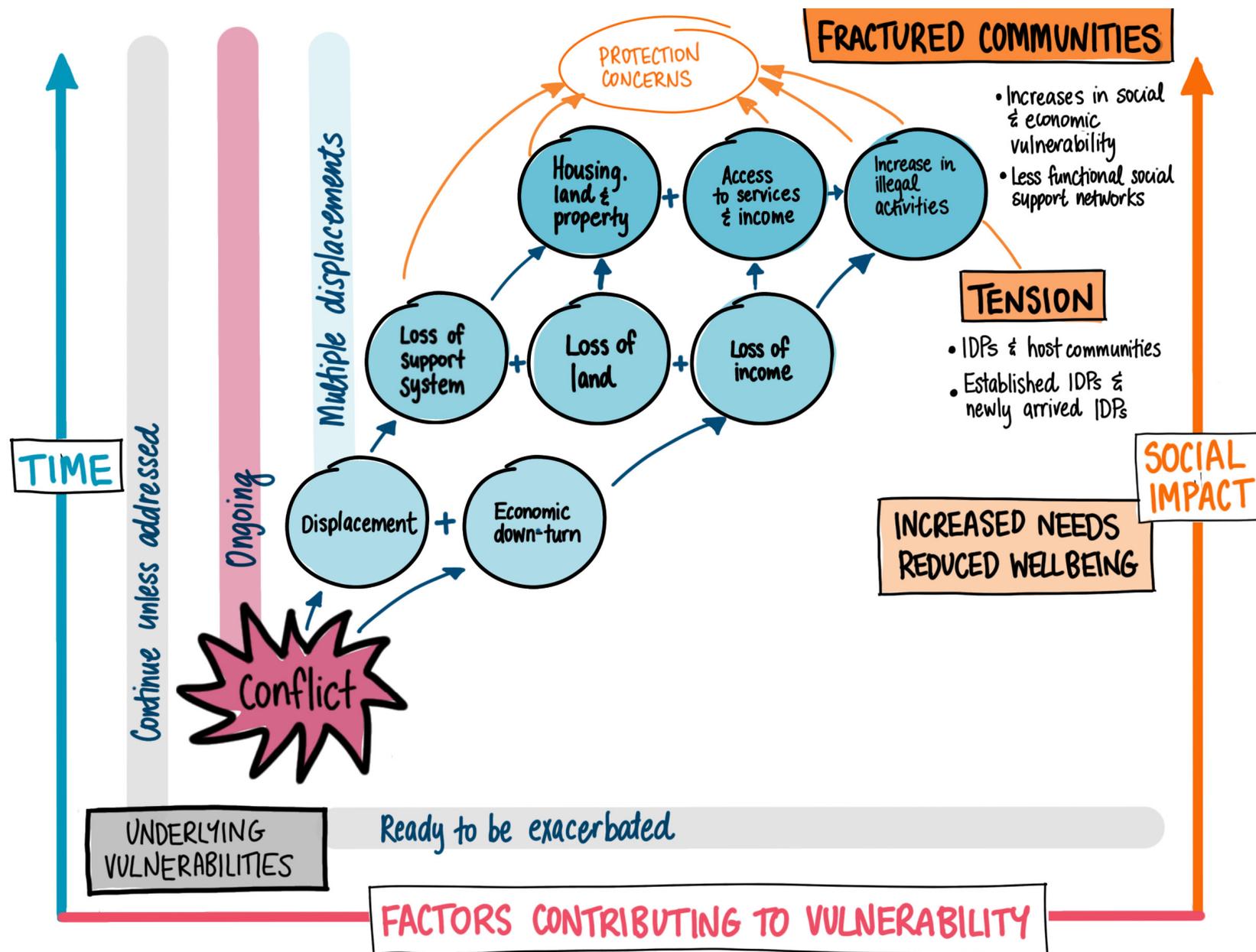
- **Tensions between IDPs and landlords around displacement sites:** displacement sites in Marib are privately owned by landlords. Initially, landowners allowed IDPs to stay to show their support and hospitality. With the increasing number of IDPs, areas that previously hosted 200 households are now hosting around 1,000 households, creating concerns

among landlords about the longer-term damage and accessibility of their land (KII 05/12/2021; IOM 11/12/2021). The terrain in Marib is sandy and lacks an efficient sanitation system. The sewerage system is buried underneath or beside IDP settlements. With the rise of the population, the potential of soil collapse increases. There have also been many reported incidents of people and cars falling into the sewerage (KII 05/12/2021). Besides limited access to services, IDPs and host communities are also exposed to diseases such as malaria, cholera, typhoid, and dengue.

- **Tensions between landlords and IDPs about rented houses have increased:** it is not uncommon for people living in districts such as Al Jubah and Jabal Murad to own houses in Marib Al Wadi. Before the war, these houses would either be left vacant for the owners to use as they wished or leased to tenants. With the continuous rise of displacement, these houses have increasingly been occupied by IDPs. With the conflict moving to districts such as Al Jubah and Jabal Murad, many of the house owners displaced from these areas end up wanting to live in their houses in Marib Al Wadi, requiring IDPs to vacate them. With limited alternative options for IDPs to stay, as well as their limited financial means to pay rent, this situation is causing tension between homeowners and displaced people. Authorities typically give tenants three months to leave the houses (KII 04/01/2021). This is an indication that more people are becoming vulnerable as the conflict and economic situation worsen in and around Marib.
- **Tensions between existing and new IDPs:** many existing IDPs refuse to allow new IDPs into displacement sites as they fear this will cause problems with the landowners, who might ask them all to leave. They are also worried about competing over scarce resources (KII 05/12/2021; KII 07/12/2021).
- **Tensions between IDPs and migrants (originating from Somalia and Ethiopia):** anecdotal observations indicate that migrants are taking jobs that IDPs could do because the former are prepared to work for less. Migrants work in restaurants, farms, and hospitals in return for less than the local daily wage. This is not unusual as these jobs have typically been associated with migrant workers, but in the current situation, the same jobs have become acceptable to IDPs, who are grappling with a lack of income, depleted resources, and multiple displacements. This issue is resulting in tensions between IDPs and migrants and could also further lower wage rates for both groups (KII 04/01/2021; KII 05/12/2021).

In the context of weak and deteriorating state institutions and services, individuals traditionally helped those they were connected with through family, kinship, tribal, geographic, or other ties. This interconnectedness resulted in the sharing of financial support, shelter, fuel, food, water, and companionship. The conflict and all its associated impacts have increased overall needs and strained resources. This has altered the capacity of Yemenis to share resources and has affected social networks, which have grown much narrower and more selective. While IDPs living in displacement sites and with host families would have once been considered guests deserving of support, they are now seen as a threat to available resources; even extended family and those affiliated by tribal connections can often not be supported.

Social impact of conflict and associated factors over time



↓ Reduced purchasing power affecting wellbeing and changing social and cultural dynamics across Yemen

The value of the rial in IRG areas improved in December after losing around 50% of its exchange rate against the USD within four months (August–November). By late December, the rial in IRG areas had regained 53% of its rate, reaching YER 1,700 per USD 1, from around YER 800 per USD 1.

The recovery began in early December after a change in the senior management and board of directors for the Aden branch of the Central Bank of Yemen (YETI accessed 12/01/2022; FEWS NET 06/01/2022). Along with this improvement, the regulations imposed on traders and exchange shops to stabilise the currency helped to slightly decrease prices. For example, the cost of the monthly food basket decreased by 25% in December compared to November (FAO accessed 10/01/2022). Although this is a positive improvement, the economic situation remains critical, and the price decreases appear temporary. In DFA areas, the exchange rate remains stable at YER 600 per USD 1, but prices continue to rise. Many families across Yemen remain extremely vulnerable and are unable to meet their needs. Many people, especially public sector employees across the country, receive their salaries in rial. These salaries do not adjust with the changing exchange rate, keeping their values low.

- Despite an appreciation of the rial in IRG areas and modest price reductions (particularly fuel), the local currency remained unstable. As at 10 January, it has depreciated to YER 1,200 per USD 1 in Aden. This issue compounds the weak governance regulations in place to force traders to maintain low prices.
- Many salaries are inconsistently paid or unpaid across Yemen, meaning that people still lack the financial capability to purchase basic needs despite improvements in prices.

Salah, a 40-year-old father of three living in Aden, shared: "It was like a glimmer of hope when the prices decreased in December. I went to the supermarket and bought 5kg of rice and 10kg of flour. Yesterday, I went back to the supermarket, but I saw that the prices increased again because the rial started to depreciate again."*

The overall depreciation of the rial in IRG areas, together with low and inconsistent salaries and income across the country, has increased prices and contributed significantly to decreasing people's purchasing power. This situation has had negative impacts on their quality of life and social and cultural networks, ultimately increasing their economic vulnerability.

Living conditions continue to deteriorate because of poor economic conditions and the decrease in purchasing power. People resort to the less preferred options in all categories of essential needs, including food, housing, health, medication, clothing, and education. Although there has been a slight improvement in December in the affordability of the food basket, its cost has still increased during 2021 by 71% compared to December 2020 (YETI accessed 10/01/2022; FEWS NET 06/01/2022). For many households, fish, meat, and chicken are luxury foods. Key informants reported purchasing essential items only, and these generally consisted of rice, sugar, and vegetable oil. They are no longer able to purchase things that were previously considered necessities, such as cheese, milk, eggs, and cleaning detergents (KII 06/01/2022; KII 07/01/2022).

Yasmine is a 58-year-old widow and the mother of five children living in Aden. She works as a teacher in a private school. She earns YER 40,000** per month (equivalent to USD 33). To survive, she offers private tutoring lessons in the afternoon. "Sometimes, when I come back from work, all I want is to rest and enjoy my time, but this has become a luxury. I know if I don't keep on working, nobody will feed us and pay for my youngest children's education." Ahmed,* Yasmine's son, needs around YER 3,000** daily for transportation to the vocational institute. In total, he needs YER 60,000,** per month which exceeds her salary. Yasmine shared: "I am glad that the rest of the children have finished their education and can at least be responsible for their own expenses."*



Ali is 30 years old, married, and lives in his family's house in Taiz city. "I work in a local humanitarian organisation. I earn in dollars – around USD 500 per month – but most of it goes to the house, as I live with my parents. I contribute for food, electricity, water, and my younger brother's education. I have always dreamt of having a more private life, but I would not be able to afford it, as it will be difficult to meet my living expenses and my family's expenses."*

People access health facilities as a last resort. They resort to buying the cheapest brands of medicine, compromising the quality of their health. This practice has led to worsening medical and health conditions and probably caused an influx of cheaper medicine on the market to meet the shift in local demand (KII 07/01/2022). It can also lead to serious health consequences, especially for people with chronic health diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and blood pressure problems. In the long run, such consequences might require more expensive medication (CDC 17/11/2017; KII 06/01/2022).

Increased cost of rent. Some landlords across the country only accept payment in USD and Saudi riyals, which are inaccessible for many families. Other landlords increase the rent annually, which makes it hard for people to meet the continuous rise of rent with no rise in income. Often, their only option is to stay in inadequate housing, such as unfinished/partially built or damaged houses or non-residential buildings (including shops), or to sublet rooms in apartments. Many of these options are overcrowded and lack essential facilities, such as running water for sanitation (KII 06/01/2022; KII 08/01/2022).

Salma is 40 years old and lives in Hadramawt with her three nephews. She works in a government office as a secretary. She earns around YER 35,000** (approximately USD 29) per month. The combined monthly income of the household is around YER 70,000** (approximately USD 58). Over the past months, she has sold her gold and some furniture to survive. "The landlord increased the rent from YER 45,000 to 50,000." Salma is worried about the rent, as she does not know how they are going to afford the increasing daily life expenses. "In the past, I would not worry about an emergency because I knew I had my relatives and that everybody would contribute their support. Now, nobody is capable of providing support anymore."*

Social connectedness and support have decreased. One of the key elements of Yemeni culture is visiting extended family and friends regularly as well as during celebrations and life events, such as weddings, funerals, and births. This tradition has decreased, as people can no longer afford transportation costs and offer practical support (which used to be money, cake, sweets, or fruits). This has created frustration and affected the social connectedness of people. With the gradual dissolution of these traditions, the cultural behaviour of the community has also changed. People no longer benefit from the support (gifts) they used to receive from family and friends. People who used to give away some of the food they received to the poor now keep it for themselves given the current situation (KII 07/01/2022).

Lara is 25 years old and lives in Aden city with her mother and her brother. "Our main income is from my father's retirement pension of YER 80,000 per month (approximately USD 66). Together with my brother's salary, our total income is YER 115,000 per month (approximately USD 96). We are able to cover our essential needs by prioritising the most needed things, like food, cooking gas, electricity, and water. We have stopped visiting relatives and attending social events because we can't afford the fuel prices and we can't provide support to our extended family. This has been frustrating because I no longer see my cousins, relatives and family. Sometimes it feels lonely."*

ON THE WATCH LIST

There are fewer reported incidents of religious repression.

Incidents of religious repression continue to be reported in DFA areas but have decreased compared to the previous quarter (July–September)(ACLED data accessed 30/12/2021). These incidents and their associated impacts on people usually increase or decrease depending on religious events such as Islamic celebrations (including Ramadan, the birthday of the prophet, or other celebrations) or to recruit fighters and collect money as revenues (by imposing taxes and enrolling children in summer school) (ACLED 16/12/2021).

Women's civic space continues to shrink in DFA areas, while journalists in IRG areas face detention and violence.

Several incidents related to gender segregation and restrictions on Yemeni women in DFA areas were reported between October–December. Authorities transferred female teachers from a secondary school in Sana'a city to another school, citing gender segregation as a pretext (ACLED 19/11/2021). Female Yemeni aid workers continue to be required to travel with a Mahram (male guardian) in Al Hodeidah, Hajjah, and Sa'dah (OCHA 09/11/2021). In Ayal Surah district and Rada city in Amran governorate, a document circulated banning women from gathering for social occasions at nighttime and playing music and singing at weddings. The document was signed by local authorities (Al-Mushrfeen) and senior tribal leaders loyal to the DFA (ACLED 09/12/2021). A similar document had circulated previously in Bani Hushaysh district. Several incidents against journalists were reported in IRG areas. A journalist and her child were killed in a car bombing incident in Aden city. Several journalists were also detained, and several media stations were shut down (Al Jazeera 11/11/2021). These incidents limit the overall freedom of speech and make journalists vulnerable to detention, violence, and being injured or killed.

Civil unrest decreased, but this might be temporary as most reasons remain unresolved.

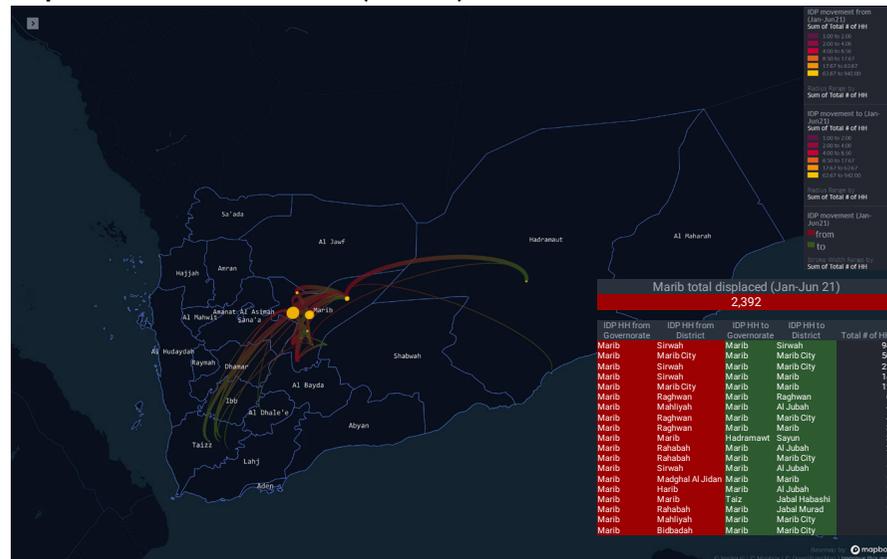
Civil unrest continued in October–November and decreased in December. The main reason for the December decrease was the improvement in the value of the rial. Key factors behind the unrest, including public services such as water and electricity, remain unresolved (ACLED data accessed 30/12/2021).

The situation of Yemeni migrants travelling to Saudi Arabia and their remittance recipients improved.

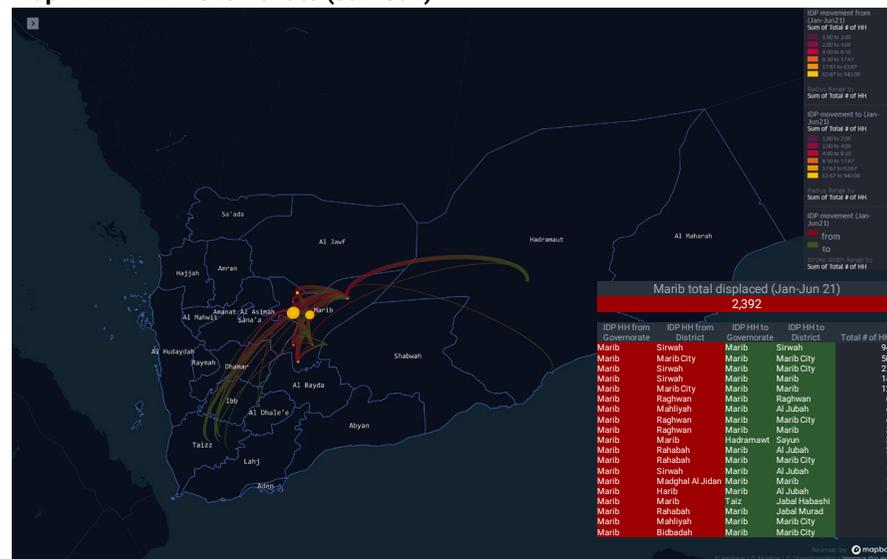
No additional travel restrictions or requirements have been imposed on Yemeni workers crossing into Saudi Arabia since July 2021. Pre-existing vaccination and negative PCR test requirements remain in place. Many Yemeni workers are finally able to meet these requirements, and immigration services are functioning more smoothly, allowing many Yemeni workers to return to their workplaces in Saudi Arabia (FEWS NET 06/01/2022; ACAPS 26/08/2021).

IDP movement in Marib

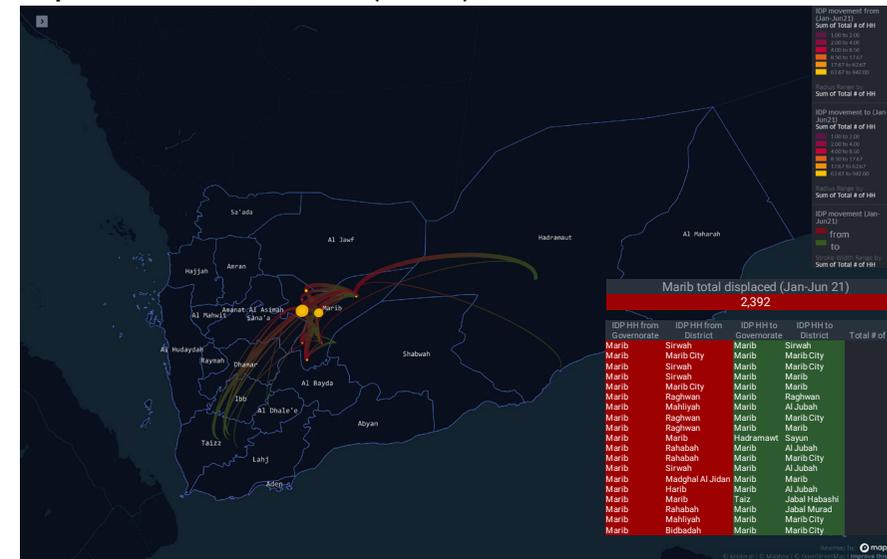
Map 1: IDP HH movement From (Jan-Jun)



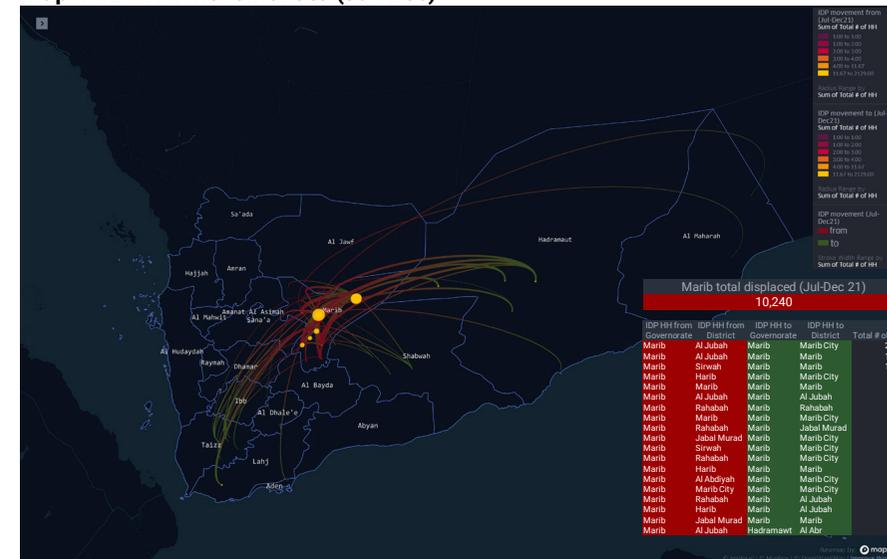
Map 2: IDP HH movement to (Jan-Jun)



Map 3: IDP HH movement From (Jul-Dec)



Map 4: IDP HH movement to (Jul-Dec)



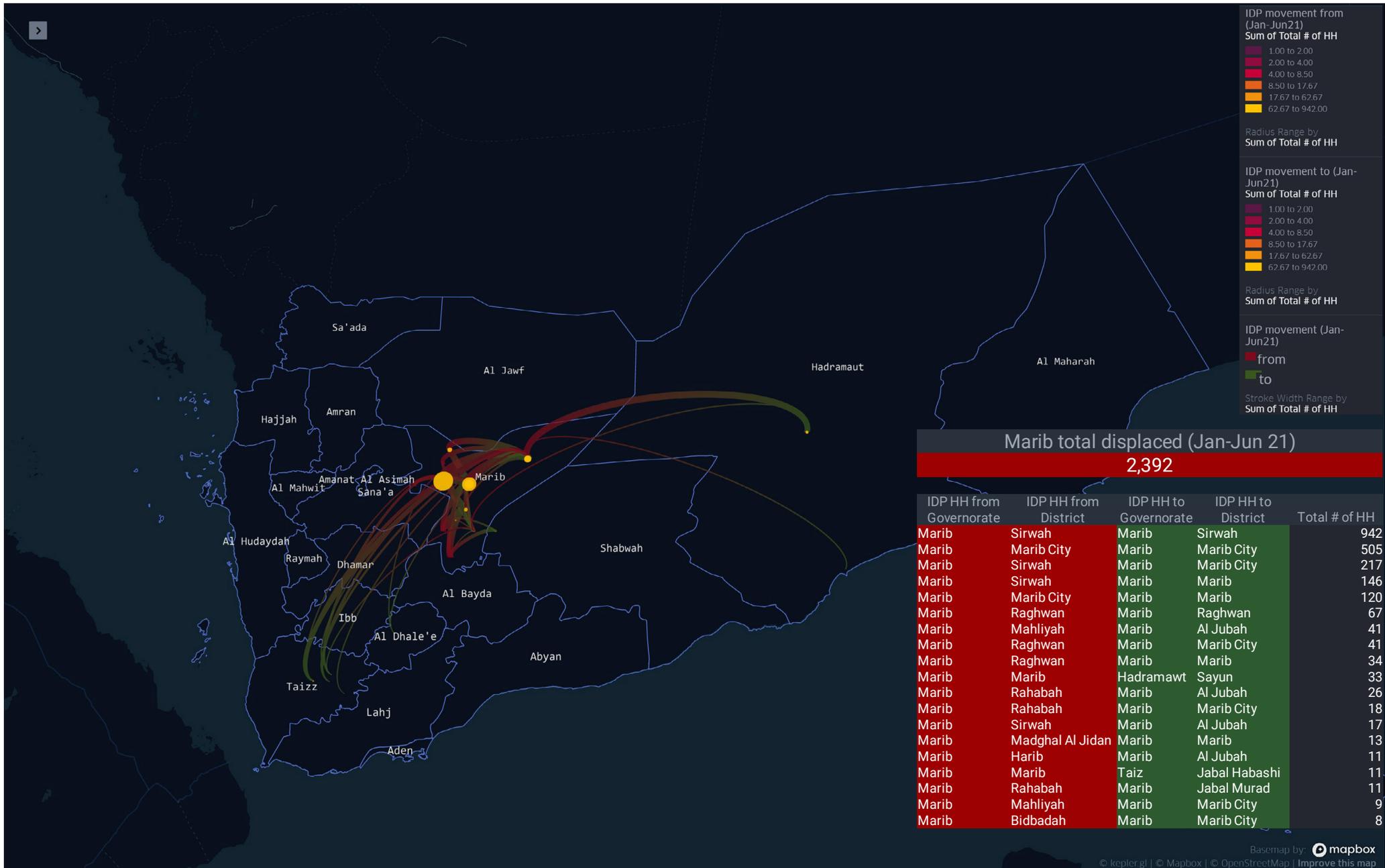
Disclaimer: The boundaries and names and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by ACAPS.

Source: IOM DTM, OpenStreetMap. Designed using kepler.gl

January–June: over 2,400 IDPs were displaced mainly from Sirwah district towards Marib Al Wadi. The majority of IDPs from Sirwah were displaced internally within Sirwah. The reasons for this situation include the limited resources households at their disposal, the cost of displacement, limitations on movement by authorities, and people choosing to stay close to their land and compromising their safety to protect their social status (KII 04/01/2022).

July–December: over 10,200 individuals were displaced in the second half of the year. As illustrated in the maps, this number is higher compared to the first six months. The yellow dots represent the districts that saw the highest movement of people from (Al Jubah, Harib, and Sirwah), and the yellow dots in the second map “IDP HH movement to” illustrate the districts receiving the most people (Marib city and Marib Al Wadi).

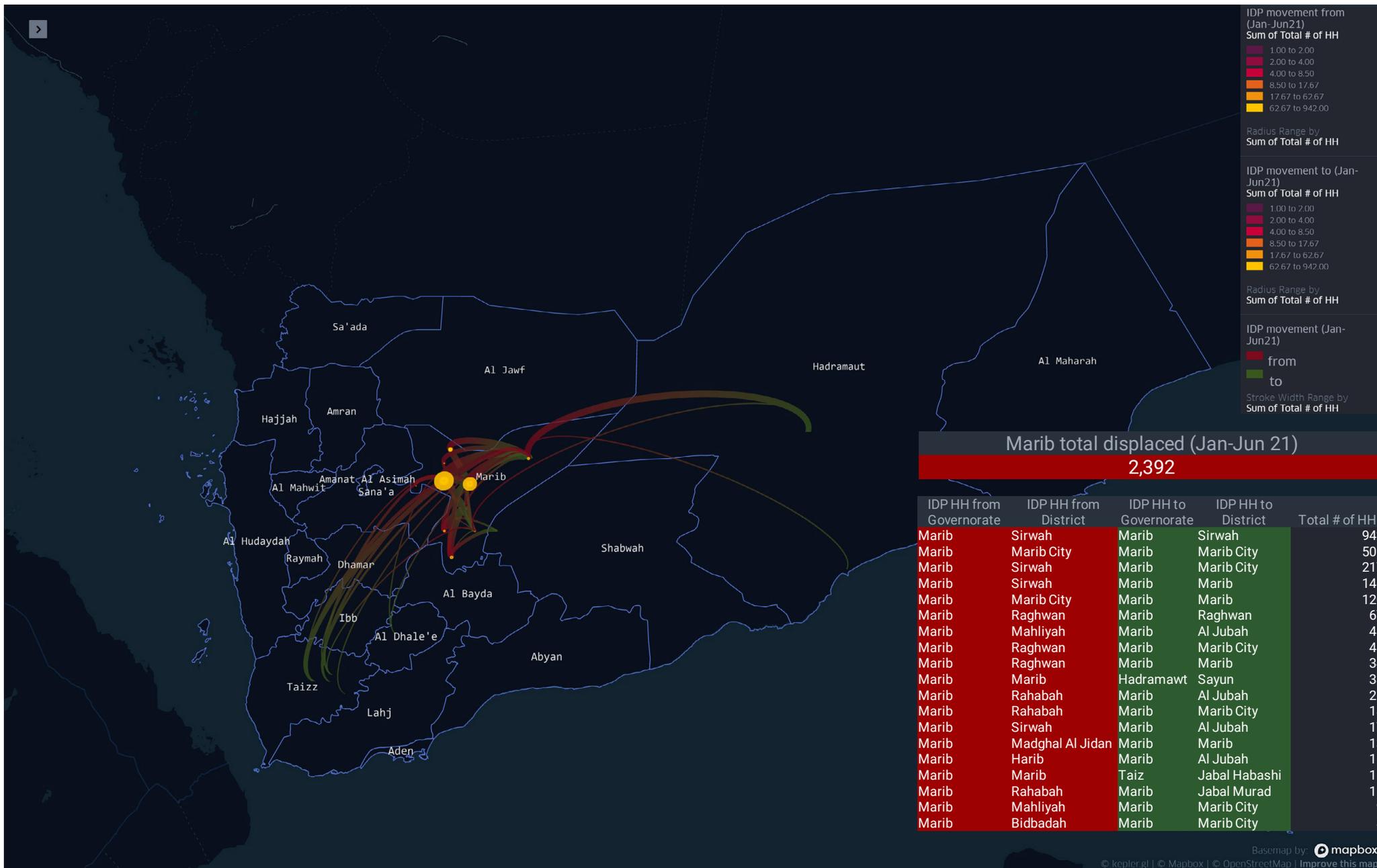
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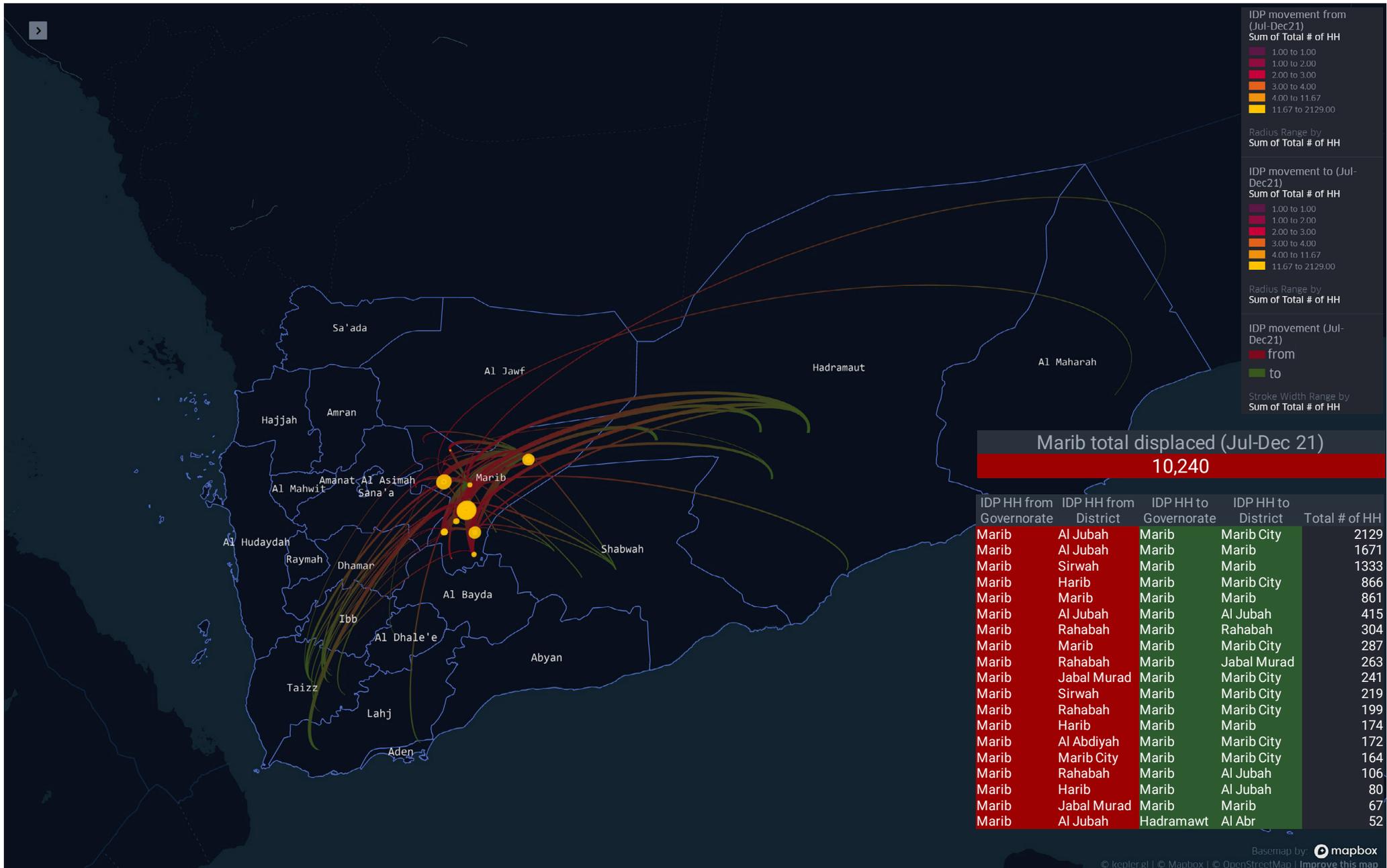
Map 2: IDP HH movement to (Jan-Jun)



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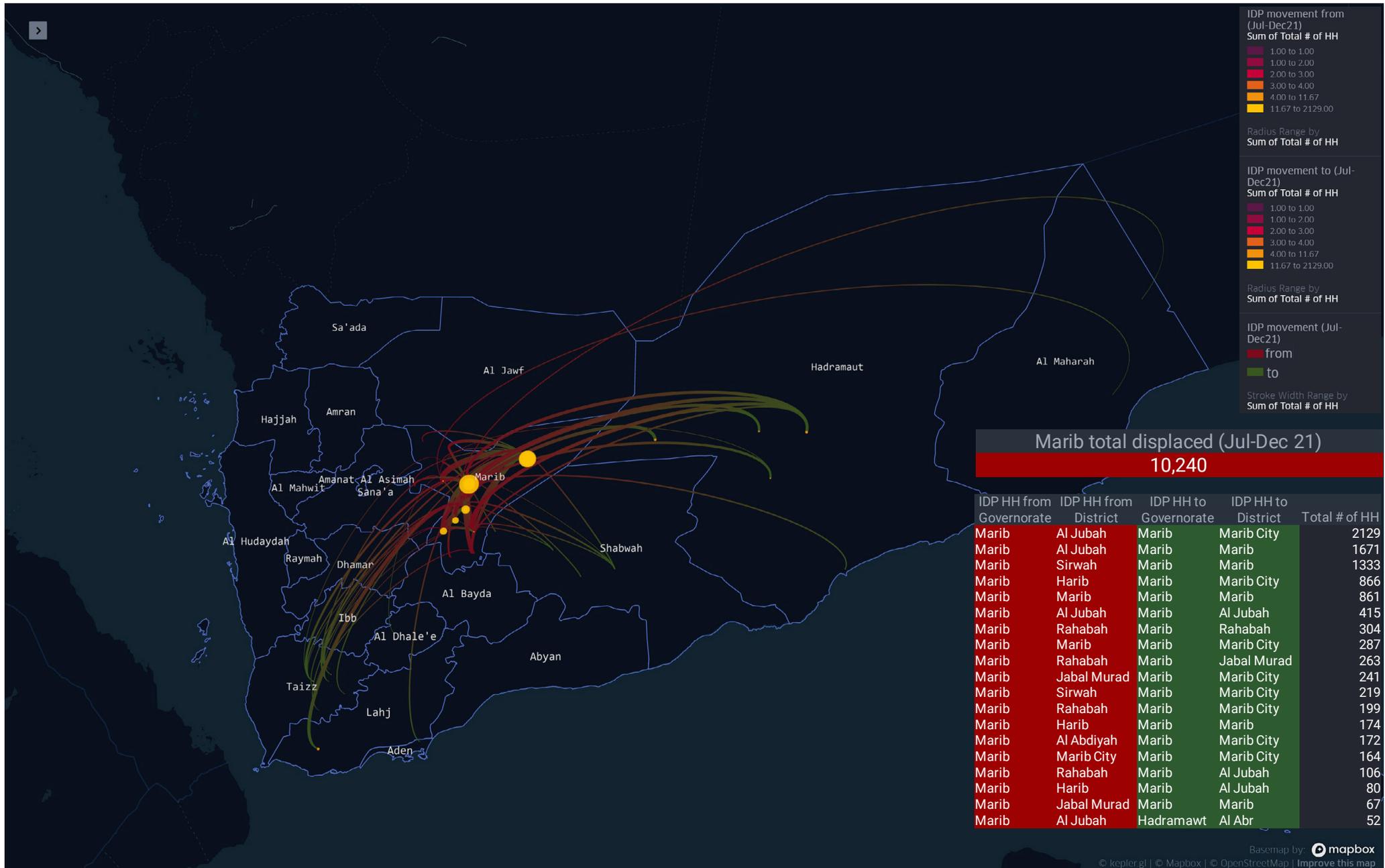
Map 3: IDP HH movement From (Jul-Dec)



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Map 4: IDP HH movement to (Jul-Dec)



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