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Combating Malnutrition in Yemen

Loha and her family live in Yemen's Al Hudaydah Governorate along the country's western coast, where near-constant conflict has killed and injured civilians and impeded access to essential goods and services for more than five years. Throughout the war, Yemen's economy and social services have continued to deteriorate, and Loha's family has increasingly struggled to meet its basic needs. As the war continued, Loha became malnourished, and her family was unable to access the health care or specialized food she needed to recover. "She was crying most of the time and [lost] weight. I was worried and confused... I was losing my daughter," said Loha's mother.

Yemen's humanitarian emergency is the biggest in the world. The UN estimates that 24.3 million people—or 80 percent of the country's population—need humanitarian assistance, and 16.2 million people will likely face acute food insecurity between January and June. Meanwhile, health and water, sanitation, and hygiene systems countrywide have either ceased or reduced operations due to the conflict, compounding vulnerabilities for Yemenis affected by the crisis.

Since 2018, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) has supported Première Urgence



Photo Courtesy of PUI

Internationale (PUI) to provide life-saving nutrition services for families in Al Hudaydah and neighboring Ta'izz Governorate. In October, Loha's mother brought her to a PUI-supported clinic in the area, where the organization's nutrition specialists diagnosed Loha with severe wasting—a life-threatening form of malnutrition. PUI staff provided Loha with malnutrition treatment for more than two months, and her mother stayed by her side at the facility throughout. Loha made a full recovery and was discharged from treatment in December. "My daughter recovered very quickly," her mother said.

With USAID/BHA support, PUI continues to provide wasting screening and treatment for children and pregnant and lactating women in the two governorates. The non-governmental organization also distributes food to families with members suffering from wasting and conducts awareness sessions on infant and young child feeding practices to help prevent malnutrition among vulnerable households.