



### [The First Commercial Flight in Nearly Six Years Takes Off from Sanaa Airport in Yemen Carrying Hospital Patients Needing Treatment Abroad](#)

The first commercial flight in nearly six years has taken off from the capital city of Sanaa in Yemen as part of a two-month truce agreement between the warring parties there. The flight not only marks a potential important milestone in the efforts to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in the country, but observers are hopeful that it could be another indicator of a more permanent peace deal between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels. It has also raised the spirits of many Yemenis on the ground. There are an estimated 300,000 patients awaiting the resumption of flights for humanitarian and medical purposes, according to the Houthi-run ministry of health. Medical facilities inside the war-ravaged country do not have the ability to treat many of the wounded due to a lack of supplies and training as a result of the longstanding conflict.

The ongoing truce in Yemen began on April 2nd, coinciding with the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. So far, the cessation of hostilities arrangement has held. Some of the other critical agreements that have been reached in principle, along with the resumption of commercial flights in and out of Sanaa, include reopening roads to the rebel-besieged city of Taiz and allowing fuel tankers through the Saudi blockade in order to deliver much-needed fuel. Though it has been relatively successful to this point, tensions remain high. Original plans for the first flight had to be scrapped, with both sides blaming each other for the delays. There have also been several accusations of each other respective side violating the truce.

The milestone flight carried 137 passengers, many of whom were patients needing treatment abroad whose families also accompanied them. It is the hope that this will be the first of numerous flights that will help transport out those who require medical treatment and transport in desperately needed humanitarian aid. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) described this flight as a “stepping stone towards sustainable peace.” The NRC expressed that if the parties keep working together, these flights could help save thousands of lives, as well as start to revive the country’s crippled economy. More flights are scheduled with the possibility of other ones to be added. These flights are tangible actions that may show the warring parties that peace is not only possible, but will also be mutually beneficial to all of those involved.

The conflict in Yemen, which started in 2015, has caused the death of over 370,000 people according to United Nations estimates. 60% of these deaths were from indirect causes, such as lack of food, water, and health services. Two out of three Yemenis are currently in need of humanitarian aid and protection. Despite the truce, the situation remains dire. Much of Yemen’s infrastructure, including hospitals, roads, and schools, has been destroyed by the fighting. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also worsened the food shortages, with 2.5 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. In the face of all of these struggles, the Yemeni people are working hard to try and alleviate the circumstances. Many are attempting to resume their businesses, while others are working to rebuild their shattered homes. There is a long way to go, but with continued efforts to halt hostilities, peace may be more attainable now than it was in recent years.