

Yemen national blood bank faces threat of closure

August 10 2017, by Menna Zaki



A man donates blood in National Blood Transfusion and Research Centre in Sanaa, Yemen, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2017. The director of Yemen's national blood bank says the facility could shut down within a week after a medical aid charity ended its support. Ayman el-Shihari, the blood bank's general director, said Thursday its closure could lead to a "humanitarian catastrophe." (AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)

Yemen's national blood bank faces a complete shutdown within a week

after a medical aid charity ended its two-year support, the facility's director said on Thursday, warning that the closure could exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country.

Doctors Without Borders, known by the French acronym MSF, gave out its last donation to the [blood bank](#) in June after it signed an agreement with U.N. World Health Organization handing over the support to the U.N. agency.

"Supplies are running out," Ayman al-Shihari told The Associated Press over the phone from the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

The MSF supplies cover only two months.

Al-Shihari added that the facility has yet to receive any aid from the WHO.

Yemen is facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The two-year-long war has crippled the country's health system, depleted access to safe drinking water and put millions on the brink of famine.

Al-Shihari said that the bank's closure could lead to a "humanitarian catastrophe," noting that the facility receives up to 3,000 cases monthly, including patients with cancer, thalassaemia, kidney failure and those wounded in the war. Thalassaemia is a hereditary form of anemia that requires regular transfusions.

A Saudi-led coalition embarked on a campaign in March 2015 in Yemen with the aim of dislodging Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels who control the capital and much of the north and restoring to power the internationally-recognized government of Abed Rabbou Mansour Hadi.

The stalemated war has killed at least 10,000 people and has led to

extensive civilian suffering with 17 million going hungry and nearly 80 percent of Yemeni children in need of humanitarian assistance, according to U.N. figures.



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