

Conjoined Yemeni twins flown to Jordan for surgery: UNICEF

February 7 2021

Conjoined baby twins born in war-ravaged Yemen were taken to Jordan Saturday for separation surgery, the UN children's agency said, almost two months after a hospital warned they were in critical condition.

Born in the Yemeni capital Sanaa in mid-December, "an echocardiogram showed that each of the two children had their own heart, though the position of the heart of one of them is not normal," Majda al-Khatib, director of Al-Sabeen hospital, told AFP at the time.

The facility's "low capacity" prevented doctors from accurately determining "which organs are connected", she added.

UNICEF said Saturday that the twins "have been medically evacuated this morning to Amman, Jordan, where they will undergo a separation surgery".

"Following weeks of arrangements... they are now in the safe hands of a team of expert surgeons. We hope to see them back soon in Sanaa in good health," Philippe Duamelle, UNICEF representative to Yemen, was quoted as saying in a statement.

The Yemeni capital has been controlled since 2014 by Iran-backed Huthi rebels, who are fighting an internationally recognised government that is supported by a Saudi-led military coalition.

The conflict has devastated health services already under-resourced in

the Arab world's poorest country.

Sanaa's airport is closed to commercial flights due to an air blockade imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, though UN flights are permitted.

The twins' 35-year-old mother and father had accompanied the babies on the trip, UNICEF said.

The agency said it had been able to cover the operation's medical and logistical expenses thanks to "generous contributions from multiple private individual donors".

In February 2019, a pair of conjoined baby boys in need of urgent treatment died in Sanaa two weeks after their birth.

Their plight had sparked a plea for urgent medical treatment overseas.

Yemen's conflict has precipitated the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations.

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