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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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July 8, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

A high level of human suffering persists in Yemen as the conflict continues. My office has recently heard reports from constituents about several serious health emergencies, the most critical being an outbreak of dengue fever in the country. Sadly, these reports were recently confirmed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO reports that there are more than 3,000 cases of dengue fever in Yemen, with a high concentration in the city of Aden. This is likely an underestimate given the capacity for public health surveillance in Yemen, and the fact that many people infected with the disease may not yet be hospitalized. In fact, some outside groups have reported twice as many cases nationwide as the WHO estimate. The CDC reports there is no specific medication for the treatment of dengue fever, but patients require fluids, monitoring by a physician, and hospitalization in severe cases. U.S. leadership is required to contain this outbreak and ensure that patients are receiving the treatment they need.

A negotiated solution to the ongoing conflict is the best way to address this emerging public health crisis in Yemen. I applaud your efforts in starting a dialogue with the Saudis, the UN, and other relevant parties to find a peaceful solution to this conflict. However, the people of Yemen need assistance now to combat this outbreak of dengue fever. Therefore, I respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. What steps is the State Department taking today to combat the outbreak of dengue fever in Yemen? Specifically, does the department have plans to ship hydrating fluids or other necessary supplies to the country? Please provide a detailed response.
2. How much current U.S. foreign assistance to Yemen is dedicated to public health issues? Could any existing aid dollars be repurposed to help fight this outbreak?

3. When the conflict ends Yemen will require a significant rebuilding of their already weak public health systems. What plans does the State Department have for rebuilding in Yemen, with a specific focus on hospitals, clinics, and other facilities to promote public health? Please provide a detailed response.
4. The WHO reports that “supplies for acute trauma care are running dangerously low, and medicines for chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and hypertension have already run out. Additional supplies of medicines and foods...are urgently needed.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, they state “restrictions on shipments into Yemen have meant that only a fraction of commercial imports have been able to enter the country.”<sup>2</sup> What restrictions on commercial shipments are currently in place in Yemen? Do any such restrictions make allowances for humanitarian or medical goods?

Thank you for your attention to these important questions. Your responses will help provide assurances about the U.S. response in Yemen and will help inform Congress about potential responses to this crisis. I look forward to receiving your response and stand ready to work with you to help combat the outbreak of dengue fever in Yemen.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

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<sup>1</sup> [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/yem\\_hrp\\_190615\\_final.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/yem_hrp_190615_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid