This method summary outlines the process OCHA employed to classify all 333 districts in Yemen as 'accessible' or 'hard-to-reach' to support ongoing monitoring, advocacy and operational effort to expand humanitarian access to populations in need. The approach was developed based on close consultation with humanitarian organizations, subject matter experts, and the Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG).

Background
In April 2019, as outlined in the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) 2019, OCHA developed an enhanced classification framework and methodology to correlate humanitarian access data with information on barriers at the district-level to inform humanitarian operations and operational decision-making.

Building on existing analysis, this approach aims to support humanitarian organizations in the scale-up of operations by providing an empirically-grounded understanding of the access environment, principal constraints faced, and their effects on humanitarian operations to respond to growing needs on the ground.

Conceptual framework
Further to the YHRP, the identification of 'accessible' and 'hard-to-reach' (HTR) locations provides an overarching classification system for monitoring the access environment in Yemen.

HTR refers to the areas that humanitarian actors cannot regularly access for the purpose of sustained humanitarian programming, at a scale commensurate with the assessed needs, due to the denial of access, the continual need to secure access or other restrictions (i.e., active conflict, security checkpoints or lack of timely approval).[1] Within select HTR districts, particularly conflict-affected settings, humanitarian partners can face acute restrictions that warrant special categorization as 'militarily encircled' or 'besieged'.

HTR districts are distinct from accessible ones both in the difficulty with which humanitarian personnel can operate in a given area, but also the challenge for people in need to reach assistance and services.[2] Partners and people in need may still face administrative obstacles in accessible areas, both at the local and national level, that may impede humanitarian activities.

In the context of Yemen, HTR districts can be further distinguished, based on qualitative assessment, by their principal access impediments, which often overlap:

1. Armed Conflict: districts where armed conflict, active frontlines and/or presence of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) hinder sustained humanitarian programming;

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[1] See UNOCHA, *2018 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview*, 21 November 2017, p. 5.
[2] Although unstated in this definition, in line with global understandings of humanitarian access, the HTR classification necessarily accounts for affected populations' ability to access humanitarian assistance and services. See A/RES/46/182.

2. Bureaucratic: areas in which a lack of permissions from and/or interference by local leaders and national authorities impede humanitarian operations from responding to assessed needs;

3. Logistics: districts where physical impediments (e.g., difficult physical terrain, damaged roads, weather conditions) inhibit humanitarian presence and activities.

As seen in Figure 1, based on the abovementioned constraints, eight types of districts can be identified:

Figure 1: Access classifications
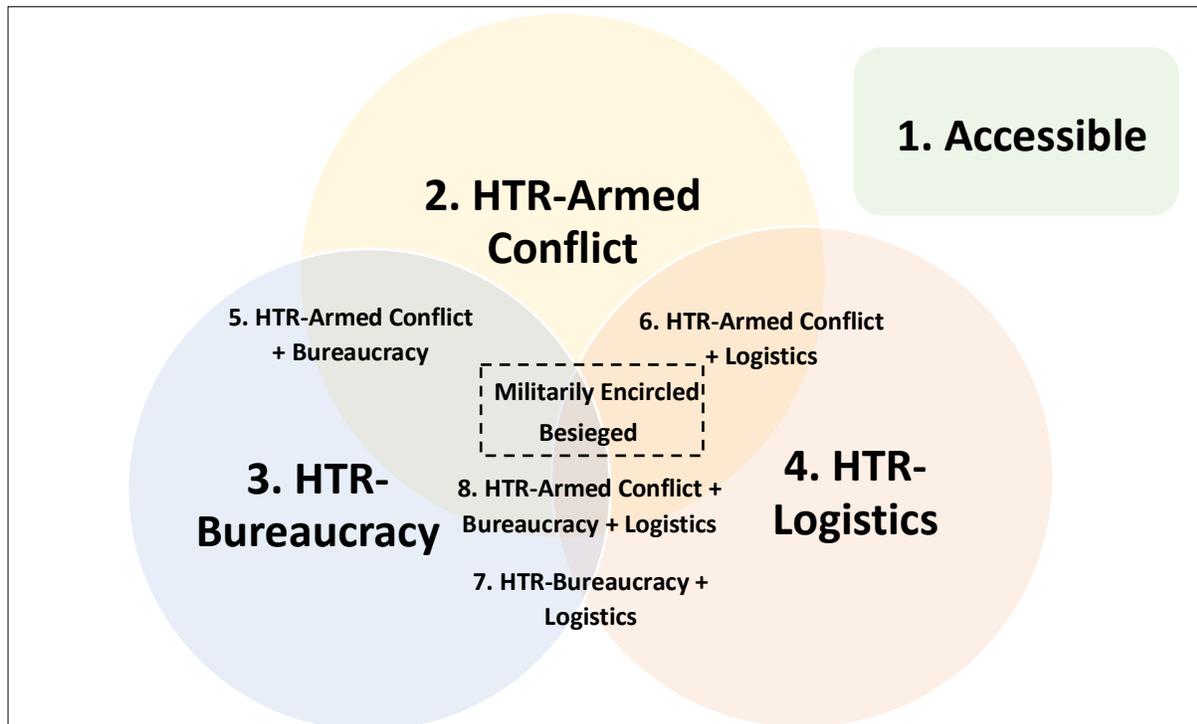
Similarly, select areas within districts may be designated as besieged or militarily encircled, if acute conflict-related restrictions are identified.

Methodology

In April 2019, OCHA conducted a qualitative review of all 333 districts in Yemen, based on an analysis of several access, conflict and operational datasets, to identify accessible and HTR locations. The review proceeded in four steps:

1. Access severity focus group discussions (Jan 2019): An initial analysis of the OCHA-convened access severity focus group discussions (FGDs) provided a baseline of the level of access and principal constraints in all 333 districts, as identified by UN, INGO and NNGO participants.[3] Particular focus was given to factors that led to select districts being identified as 'medium' and 'high' access severity.

2. Inter-cluster gap analysis (Oct-Dec 2018): A comparison of clusters' assessed targets and their monthly response allowed for further analysis about the status of response activities in each

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[3] See Severity of Humanitarian Access Difficulties in Yemen (Jan 2019), February 2019.

district. Districts with large gaps were examined in detail to determine how access restrictions may contribute to a restrictive operating environment.

3. <u>Constraint indicators</u>: Based on the first two stages, a preliminary list of districts was identified for further review to assess the degree to which conflict, bureaucratic and logistic dynamics constrained UN and NGO organizations' capacity to reach people in need with assistance and services. Several indicators were examined for each dynamic, with scores weighted and aggregated to create a single composite score for each preliminary district.

4. <u>Contextual analysis</u>: A contextual analysis was conducted for each district to supplement the above indicators and validate the overall qualitative assessment about its access status. Relevant dynamics for further contextual include, *inter alia*,
   1. Effects of principal constraints on assessed humanitarian needs;
   2. Clusters responses adversely affected by principal constraints;
   3. Stakeholders in determining humanitarian access;
   4. Inaccessible/under-served communities within districts (e.g., populations near frontlines);
   5. Conflict dynamics that may constitute the encirclement or besiegement of a population.

Districts were classified as HTR based on the above qualitative assessment of prevailing constraints and context. A principal constraint was identified based on the score of the three constraint indicators.

Prior to finalizing the list of HTR districts, all districts were mapped and reviewed to identify any that may have been inadvertently excluded in the analysis.