



IWM North’s Yemen season will spotlight “world’s worst” humanitarian crisis through 50 objects and photographs from the on-going conflict

Described by the UN as the “world’s worst” humanitarian crisis, the on-going conflict in Yemen has left an estimated 80% of the country’s men, women and children in desperate need of assistance; but how has this man-made crisis affected the people of Yemen?

At the forefront of a major season of programming at IWM North, *Yemen: Inside a Crisis* (17 May – 24 November 2019) will be the UK’s first exhibition to address Yemen’s on-going conflict and humanitarian crisis. Showcasing around 50 objects and photographs, many of which have been exclusively sourced from Yemen for this exhibition, *Yemen: Inside a Crisis* will also be accompanied by a wider programme of events around Manchester, examining the impact that the crisis is having on the Yemeni people.

The war in Yemen was sparked in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings of 2011. Following the forced removal of the country’s president of 33 years, Ali Abdullah Saleh, a period of political transition failed to address many of the country’s core problems. As the political process faltered under the country’s new president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, clashes broke out in Yemen’s most northerly governorate, Saada – home of the predominantly Zaydi Shia Houthi movement. When fighting between the Hadi government and the Houthis broke out in 2014, Yemen was already on the brink of collapse. Its political and economic situation made it one of the poorest and most fragile states in the world, but it was the introduction of conflict into a perfect storm of conditions that pushed Yemen over the edge. Having been notably absent from British media for the majority of the war’s duration, the conflict and crisis in Yemen is now prevalent.

Taking this moment as its starting point, *Yemen: Inside a Crisis* will explore how fighting has tipped the fragile nation into an economic tailspin. It will also examine Britain’s complex relationship with Yemen – from its control of the city of Aden in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the paradoxical role it currently holds.

Inflation and the inaccessibility of food, water and healthcare will all be addressed, particularly focusing on the physical and psychological effects that the conflict and crisis are having on Yemen’s children. Key exhibits will include worn Yemeni Rial notes, charity food vouchers, medical equipment used to treat malnutrition and cholera, dog-eared school books and harrowing images captured by Yemeni photographers. Extraordinary personal stories from people in Yemen will give insight into the harsh realities faced by them every day, as well as the incredible resilience they have had to display.

The season will also be taken beyond the museum’s walls and into the city of Manchester for the first time in the form of a travelling digital artwork, created by FutureEverything. The interactive installation will use touch and voice-activated technology to highlight issues addressed in the exhibition and encourage members of the public to connect with possible scenarios faced by Yemeni people on a daily basis. The programme will also see the commission of new work from spoken word artist Amerah Saleh, whose original creative response to the humanitarian crisis will inform a series of workshops for Yemeni youth in the greater Manchester community and the northwest.

Louise Skidmore, Head of Contemporary Conflict at IWM, says: “IWM was founded a century ago to ensure that we never forget what it means to live in a world torn apart by conflict. We show how war can destabilise

regions, tear apart societies and force people to flee from their homes. The impact of the conflict and crisis in Yemen is above all a human story – one that demands our attention – and we hope that this season encourages reflection and conversation both inside and outside the museum.”

Yemen: Inside a Crisis is part of IWM's *Conflict Now* strand of programming, which features opinions of individuals who have seen, experienced and worked in areas of conflict. This exhibition has been curated with the support of Lead Advisor Iona Craig, an award-winning journalist who between 2010 and 2015 was based in Sanaa as Yemen correspondent for the Times.

Ends

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Notes to editors

Yemen: Inside a Crisis

IWM North, 17 May – 24 November 2019

Press View: 15 May 2019

Free exhibition

iwm.org.uk

#InsideYemenCrisis

IWM North

The multi award winning IWM North brings Imperial War Museums' national collection to northern audiences. Designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to represent a globe shattered by conflict, the iconic building, innovative and dynamic exhibitions, use of digital media through hourly Big Picture Shows and public events explore how war shapes lives and inspires and encourages debate.

Open Daily: 10am – 5pm. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. (Closed 24 – 26 December). Free Admission.

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IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches which attract over 2.5 million visitors each year are **IWM London**, IWM's flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; **IWM North**, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; **IWM Duxford**, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

Conflict Now

Conflict Now is a strand of programming that was launched in 2017 to coincide with the museums' centenary. IWM will explore evolving issues across the world as a result of conflict. *Conflict Now* features opinions of individuals who have seen, experienced and worked in areas of conflict – including artists, photographers, refugees, citizen journalists and war correspondents along with exhibitions and events developed by IWM and partner organisations.

IWM Institute for the Public Understanding of War and Conflict

The IWM Institute for the Public Understanding of War and Conflict is a hub to explore and experiment with innovative ways of deepening public understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and conflict through research, public programming and digital innovation. iwm.org.uk/iwm-institute