



Photo: Ahmed Basha

YEMEN: HORRIFIC KILLING OF CIVILIANS

A Report on Human Rights in Yemen
JANUARY 2017



General Context

Decades of Crises

Yemen suffered for decades from consecutive political crises and armed conflicts instigated by the geo-political situation, and the national, regional and international policies. These factors have negatively affected the livelihoods of people which were worsened by the corruption of the ruling regime, exclusion of all parties, and monopoly of power and wealth. The little margin of existing democracy did not temper the increased national resentment running counter to the oppressive political regime. National resentment was first noticed through limited protests in the southern governorates mid 2007 decrying the exclusion and marginalization of the South of Yemen. In 2001, these protests have turned into a massive popular uprising in the entire country. Yemen was one of the countries that joined the so-called 'Arab Spring'. The 2011 uprising continued for a year, faced by unprecedented violent oppression by the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The uprising reached an end by the GCC-brokered initiative signed by all political parties and sponsored by the UN. The GCC initiative put a deal in place that involved transferring Saleh's powers to his Vice President Abd Rabu Mansour Hadi and launching the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). It was agreed that the NDC would include all social and political fractions in Yemen to lead to the transition period laying the foundation for a federal state of six regions and drafting the new constitution.

The NDC marked the beginning of the transitional period where all fractions, movements and entities joined, including the Ansar Allah Movement (the Houthi Group). The Houthis had a greater share of participation in proportion to its size according to some analysts. All the political movements that joined the NDC agreed on the draft of the new constitution. However, the GCC deal and the NDC process ignored two major issues - the arms possessed by the Houthi group and the amnesty provision granted to the former President Saleh from all major human

rights violations committed during the three-decade ruling. Such situations added more challenges to the already fragile context of Yemen. This was worsened by the vivid loyalty and affiliation to the powerful dominant international powers which happened after the 2011 uprising and leading to the complete failure of the transitional period and the political agreements. Taking advantage of the political unrest and the absence of transitional justice, the Houthis were encouraged to expand their territorial hold considerably in the northern governorates starting from Amran and eventually leading to the takeover of the capital city of Sana'a in September 2014. The Houthis territorial advance was supported by the former president Saleh's forces. The political interface was completely changed as the Houthi groups with Saleh forces forced President Hadi, politicians, and the government to flee outside the country and then continued their territorial expansion. This marked a new political scene marked by the threat of violence.

Besides casting a severe siege on Taiz forced by the Houthi/Saleh forces, they have also carried out random and fatal shelling on residents and the residential neighborhoods in the city. Thousands of casualties were reported.

The human rights situation in Yemen was not perfect, and the grip of the Houthis over the capital in 2014 made it worse. Not only human rights, but the entire political domain was negatively affected as a result. The Houthis along with their patron Saleh and his loyalist forces attacked the state's structure, getting hold of most of the army's weapons and military apparatuses and continued their territorial advance. Their vicious attacks also reached those human rights activists and political opponents, who are opposing their coup. They also attacked all political, civil and media freedoms which were deteriorating the humanitarian situation and made the country a battle ground for an open proxy conflict. The Houthi and Saleh forces surrounded the presidential palace and other key locations, effectively placing President Hadi and his prime minister under house arrest. They also dissolved the parliament and announced a revolutionary committee to be responsible for ruling the country. After a month of the coup, Hadi managed to escape and reached Aden announcing it as a tem-

porary capital, yet his presidential palace was attacked by naval missiles in al-Ma'ashiq palace in Aden. Hadi and prominent figures of his cabinet managed to escape to Saudi Arabia calling on Saudi Arabia and the Arab League for a military intervention. Hadi has officially addressed the UN Council to put an end to the territorial expansion of the Houthis and Saleh forces. The Saudi Kingdom was the country most concerned by the escalation in Yemen and the grip of the country under the Houthi and Saleh forces, who have obvious alliances with its regional enemy Iran. The de facto authority of the Houthis made several economic, oil-related, and political deals with Iran along with opening a new weekly airline between Sana'a and Tehran. This was mounted by the military maneuvering over the border of Saudi Arabia, along with the striking anti-Saudi sentiment and public threats. On March 26, 2015, the Saudis formed a 10-nation coalition with five gulf countries, plus Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Sudan to fight Saleh and Houthi forces. The Arab coalition named its operations (the Decisive Storm) The Arab Coalition forced a naval blockade and cut all supplies to Houthis and the military units loyal to Saleh. The Arab Coalition justified its operations by request of Yemeni president Hadi and stating that they were in line with the Joint Arab Defense agreement and the UN resolutions about the peaceful political transition in Yemen. The airstrikes were meant to target the military sites and infrastructure, yet the operations reached civilian targets and caused critical damage to the country's infrastructure. It resulted in the death and injury of thousands of civilians including women and children. The Arab Coalition declared following some tragic events that it would open transparent investigations and it has also acknowledged the responsibility of some of the airstrikes and promised to take more compensatory measures for the affected victims. In April 14, 2015, the Security Council issued resolution 2216 under Chapter VII reaffirming its support for the legitimacy of Hadi as the President of Yemen. The resolution "Demands that all Yemeni parties, in particu-

lar the Houthis, fully implement resolution 2201 (2015), refrain from further unilateral actions that could undermine the political transition in Yemen, and further demands that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally: (a) end the use of violence; (b) withdraw their forces from all areas they have seized, including the capital Sana'a; (c) relinquish all additional arms seized from military and security institutions, including missile systems; (d) cease all actions that are exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen. The resolution called for "all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, to abide by the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference, and the relevant Security Council resolutions and to resume and accelerate inclusive United Nations brokered negotiations." On October 2, 2015, The Human Rights Council adopted in its 30th session a resolution proposed by the Group of Arab States to request the High Commissioner of Human Rights to provide Yemen with technical assistance in the field of human rights and to assist with a national independent commission of inquiry (appointed by President Hadi) to investigate all previous violations since 2011. On May 23, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon declared the start of peace negotiations between the Yemeni conflicting parties but they were repeatedly delayed. The last round of negotiations held in Kuwait in late April 2016 did not lead to any peaceful solution; it lasted for three months and the conflicting parties agreed on holding further future talks. The armed conflicts in Yemen resulted in severe factions inside the security and army apparatuses. The first group are those who are loyal to the former President Saleh and the Houthi groups on one side. The second group are the loyalists to President Hadi and the legitimate government, along with popular resistance formed in the south, north and the east as regular forces operating under the national army.

A New Yemeni Reality

A new reality resulted from the takeover of the Houthi of the capital city Sana'a. It was marked with human rights violations against political and human rights activists, journalists, peaceful protesters and professionals working with media outlets. Mohammed Salim Basindawa, the former prime minister, resigned on the same day that the Houthi captured the capital and forced all the political parties and entities to sign the Peace and National Partnership Agreement to form a new united government, seek an immediate cease fire, and un-install Houthi military checkpoints from Sana'a and the surrounding borders. Meanwhile, as the leaders of the Houthi group were signing the deal, their insurgents completed their entire control over Sana'a on September 21, 2014. In November 2014, a new united government was established, headed by Khaled Mahfoudh Bahah. The new cabinet included diverse political entities that signed the GCC initiative and from the Houthis and the Southern Movement according to the Peace and National Partnership deal. President Hadi appointed many representatives from the Houthi armed groups to vital positions in the government. Despite the deal, the Houthi group continued their oppressive approach towards their political opponents or those opposing them from civil society. They raided and looted the headquarters of the political parties, civil society organizations, human rights organizations, schools, universities, mosques, and media buildings. They kidnapped hundreds of politicians, media reporters, and human rights activists. At the same time, the Houthi group adopted a loaded hate speech against its opponents and called them either "Daish [from ISIS]" or "Takfeeri [Who accuse other with blasphemy]". This speech went side by side with a number of mysterious assassinations against high-profile politicians including some members of the Houthi movement itself. There were some bombing incidents targeting mosques, sites of worship and public places. The Houthi insurgents continued weakening the fragile united government and attacked the presidential palace in Sana'a and they put President Hadi under house arrest, resulting in the killing and injuring of 25 of Hadi's personal guards and relatives. On January 22, 2015, the continued Houthi aggressions and under house arrest prompted the newly appointed cabinet

Since the Houthi armed group takeover the capital Sana'a on September 21, 2014, Yemen has witnessed an unprecedented level of violations to basic rights. The most violated right is the right to life where the armed conflict takes the lives of Yemenis by many means.

to hand a resignation to President Hadi. A few hours later, Hadi himself handed his resignation to the parliament attributed to "the new updates that emerged since September 21, 2014". Yet, he rescinded his resignation after he managed to escape the firm grip of the Houthi to Aden and declared it the "temporary capital of Yemen." He justified his resignation that it was under force, and he declared that all decisions made after September 21 until his release were not effective and not legal. He said that these decisions were made under threat of violence from the Houthi group. Hadi's resignation handover left the country in a political turmoil prompting the Houthis to declare, away from other forces, a constitutional declaration on February 6, 2015, to dissolve the parliament and set up a Revolutionary Committee to administer the country headed by Mohammed Ali al-Houthi.

President Hadi attempted from the interim capital to regain his legitimacy as the country's lawful president by imposing new appointments. However, he was confronted by the new Saleh-Houthi coalitions that stood out against him to resume his presidential office. As a result, a mass division was created inside the security and the military institutions that resulted in an armed conflict taking place in Aden. Air forces, affiliated with the former president's regime, targeted Hadi's presidential resident in Aden.

On March 24, 2015, President Hadi effectively called on the Arab League for a military intervention to stop the territorial expansion of the Houthis and Saleh forces in Yemen and to regain his legitimacy. On March 25, 2015, pro-Saleh forces took control over Aden airport and military fire jets shelled the presidential palace of Hadi, forcing him to flee across borders by land through Hadhramout, Mahrah, to Oman and then to the Saudi Capital Riyadh. Houthi groups and Saleh troops continued their territorial expansion in the rest of the cities in order to produce a new geo-political reality by the threat of violence. But the capital Sana'a was awakened during the night of March 26, 2015 by the first strikes of the military operations of the Arab Coalition on Yemen led by the Saudis and called the "Operation Decisive Storm". Fire jets launched air strikes on the military sites of the Houthi and Saleh loyalists in Sana'a and other governorates.

Scene of Human Rights Violations:

The intensive strikes of the air campaign led by Saudi Arabia targeting the military camps of the Houthi and Saleh loyalists in Sana'a and other cities since March 26 resulted in great human rights violations. It caused deaths and injuries amongst civilians and destroyed a big part of the private and public infrastructure. The major violations caused by the air strikes were attributed to the existence of Houthi targets in these sites or being used for military purposes. On the other side, Houthi insurgents and Saleh forces have attacked the other cities since early 2014 causing major unlawful deaths amongst civilians, mass arbitrary arrests, torture and killings of prisoners, bombing houses and buildings along with other abuses to human rights. They

Houthis sweeping towards their cities. The Houthi's attempted expansion started right after their takeover of Sana'a. The Popular Resistance is composed of many political and tribal components from Mar'rib, Aden, Taiz, Lahj, Aljawf, Aldali', and Shabwah. Some of its members were accused of committing individual violations of human rights. Other violations of human rights were made by the army loyal to the legal government and the Emirates troops deployed to fight against the Houthis and Saleh forces along with Security Belt Forces and the forces of Hadhrami Elites. They killed outside of the law, conducted systematic arbitrary arrests, serious torture cases, racist discrimination incidents, narrowed the freedom of the press and expression, and administered the governorates under their control by undeclared emergency to get impunity and escape from accusations in the future. The Southern Movement committed various human rights violations along with the Al-Qaeda forc-



Photo: Ahmed Albasha

also imposed a mass punishment over the civilians of the attacked cities by setting up a full siege on people and deprived them of basic services, cutting employees' salaries and controlling all the countries' financial resources using it to finance their military operations under the "Military Effort" according to the government accusations to Houthi group. The armed popular resistance named the "Popular Resistance" was formed after the territorial advance of the

es in Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Hadhramout, and Al-Dali. They committed unlawful killings, physical attacks, kidnappings, and looted and destroyed personal properties. During the last two years of conflict, many national and local human rights organizations launched reports recording all violations witnessed by most of the countries' cities used as a battle field for the armed conflict. The types of human rights violations distributed between

The deadliest attack by Saudi-led coalition was on a funeral gathering in the Grand Hall in Sana'a in October 2016. The coalition launched double tap strikes on the hall, killing 140 people according to Houthi sources. Amongst the casualties were military and security leaders loyal to the former president Saleh and Houthi group too.

unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest, torture, shelling residential neighbors, oppressing press freedoms, forbidding employees from carrying out their jobs, restricting the countries' executive and judicial authorities, using the civilian sites for military purposes, planting landmines in agricultural lands and vital streets, recruiting children for armed fights, cutting the public services, censoring news websites, and destroying houses, schools and mosques. This report (YEMEN: HORRIFIC KILLING OF CIVILIANS) is the first publication by Rights Radar on human rights in the Arab world, produced in January 2017. It sheds light on the unlawful killings that have been taking place, highlighting some of the most prominent cases committed in 2015 and 2016 by all parties. Rights Radar will continue publishing periodical reports to monitor the human rights situation in the region. The report data and information came from Rights Ra-

dars' field reporters and monitors in more than 18 Yemeni cities. In addition, the field reporters and monitors documented reports, information and data in most of the Yemeni government along with information and data coming from UN-affiliated human rights NGOs. Rights Radar aims to document human rights violations with a professional and impartial manner without bias to any party and documenting all violations from all parties with no exclusion. This report is relying on the professionalism of its field staff and the most up-to date techniques of monitoring and documenting human rights cases. Rights Radar works on collecting and analyzing all information and data in a systematic way focusing on the main priorities in Human Rights discourse according to the International Humanitarian Law and the International Human Rights Law.

VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The field reporters of Rights Radar documented a great number of human rights violations during the time of war at many levels and in many governorates, committed by all parties involved in the conflict. The killing cases published in this report are just some examples and do not represent an inclusive report of all violations committed in Yemen.

Since the takeover by the Houthi group of the capital Sana'a on September 21, 2014, Yemen has witnessed an unprecedented level of violations to basic rights. The most violated right is the right to life where the armed conflict takes the lives of Yemenis by many means and at the hands of all parties involved, with varying degrees of responsibility. Random killing has been rampant ever since and has reached an unprecedented level. Political accusation was used as a tool in excessive killing by the Houthis in the course of oppressing their political opponents. The violation of the right to life of civilians continued with an increasing pace and took different forms. They started by oppressing protests and peaceful gatherings by firing live bullets, through mass killings and random shelling over the human gatherings and the residential neighborhoods, and ended with execution and killing by planting landmines or as a result of severe torture in prisons. Almost every day, deaths amongst civilians occur, and their rights and freedoms are violated. Children are affected by the ongoing conflict and deprived from enjoying their innocent childhood. Many factors contributed to create an environment that violates basic rights in Yemen. One of the main factors is the internal political conflict and the international interventions. In return, it has affected the human rights situation, especially the right to life and the rights of physical and moral safety. This was worsened by the absence of the institutions responsible for enforcing the law, not to mention the increase of armed systematic violence at the expense of the rule of law. Many parties committed various violations, and at the forefront are the Houthi and Saleh loyalists, who are both described as Inqilabeen (committed a coup). Also responsible are the coalition force led by the Saudis and the governmental forces and the armed Popular Resistance loyal to President Hadi. The AQAP utilized the conflict to reorganize its military structure and enhance its presence in some of the remote areas. Many Yemeni cities witnessed killings of peaceful protesters with live bullets by Saleh and Houthi forces. These forces had randomly shelled residential neighborhoods causing deaths amongst civilians, particularly in Aden Lahj, Taiz, Baidha, and Ma'rib. They were accused of the excessive use of power against civilians and surrounding neighborhoods, and killing political activists and journalists. They also terminated the lives of the security and army leaders loyal to President Hadi or those who refused to join the war with the Houthi forces. Not only killing with cold blood, their practices took on another violent level against activists by using them as human



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shields in military sites and confirmed targets for the coalition strikes led by the Saudi Kingdom. The Houthi and Saleh forces planted on purpose thousands of anti-personnel mines before their withdrawal of some of their controlled areas. The mines are still taking more civilians' lives in governorates such as Taiz, Ma'rib, Aden, Lahj, and Hajji amongst others. The air strikes launched by the Arab coalition led by the Saudi Arabia resulted in many civilian deaths and casualties in Sana'a, Hodeida, Sa'adah, Hajjah, Taiz, Ibb, Tamar, and others. The coalition air strikes that target civilians or civilian gatherings violate the rules of engagement and international humanitarian law. Despite the agreement to a ceasefire on many occasions, still the warring parties continued the fight on the ground on more than one front. This has negatively affected the humanitarian situation of civilians, who found themselves trapped in the middle of the hellish fight. It has led to thousands of fatalities, amongst which are children and women. Tens of thousands of inhabitants were forced to flee from their cities while thousands more were forced to flee outside the country. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights declares that it documents cases of fatalities amongst civilians in the armed conflict in Yemen. The total number reached an estimated 3,799 citizens, and 6,711 were injured between March 2015 and August 2016. Abaad Studies and Research Center and Sanaa Rights Center published a survey report revealing that up to 12,850 civil-

ians were killed between the takeover of the Houthi and Saleh forces on 21 September 2015 until October 2016. Around 34,620 civilians were injured during the territorial expansion of the Houthi militia and Saleh forces, amongst them 2,812 children and 2,269 women in various cities of the country. The report stated that coup-affiliated forces (Houthi/Saleh) resulted directly in killing 11,500 people, representing 89 per cent of the total number of civilian killings. This number includes 11,244 civilians killed by the Houthi and Saleh forces during their expansion operations: 914 children and 546 women. 256 civilians were killed by the mines planted by the Houthis and Saleh forces, resulting in the injury of more than 335 and most of them became disabled as a result. This all happened in five governorates: Lahj, Aden, Abyan, Dali', and Ma'rib, during one year between July 2015 to June 2016. There were other mine victims in other governorates who were not included in this survey report, such as Taiz, Baidha, Hajjah, Amran, because of the lack of precise data. The airstrikes of the Arab coalition along with army forces loyal to President Hadi resulted in killing approximately 1,350 civilians in various cities in the country, around 11 per cent of the total number of civilian deaths from early 2015 to 2016. The field reporters of Rights Radar documented a great number of human rights violations during the time of war at many levels and in many governorates, committed by all parties involved in the conflict. The cases published in this report are some samples and do not represent an inclusive report of all violations committed in the country.

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Killing Peaceful Protesters

Many cities in Yemen witnessed various protests against the Houthis, calling for their departure from the cities and the state institutions. However, these peaceful protests were met with an excessive and systematic use of power by the Houthi and Saleh forces. They used live bullets and tear gas bombs against the protesters, kidnapped, abused and tortured them to the extent of death in some cases. In Taiz city, an attack on peaceful protesters was carried out by the private forces (known previously as the Central Security) affiliated with the previous president Saleh and became under the Houthi command. They used live ammunition against them and the oppressive operations continued for days starting from March 22, 2015, resulting in the killing of at least eight protesters and the injury of 30 others. More than 279 protesters affected by tear gas were taken to hospital. Amnesty International described it as a "shocking disregard for human life." In Ibb (in the center of the country), the Houthi insurgents, assisted by people wearing the outfit of the Private Security Forces attacked several peaceful protests which resulted in deaths and injuries amongst protesters.

For example, the Houthi insurgents killed the young 23-year old man Nassir al-Shuja' on November 20, 2015 as they fired live bullets at a peaceful protest in the city of Ibb. According to his family, the bullet went through his left shoulder, damaged his heart and came out of his right shoulder and he died immediately. Two other protesters were critically injured from live bullets on the same day. On February 4, 2015, the Houthi militia fired protesters with live bullets in Ibb, injuring at least three others. A woman and a child who were passing by were killed by the Houthi's bullets during their attack on the protests, according to press sources.

In al-Baidha city in the south east of Yemen, the Houthi militia fired live bullets on protesters and killed three protesters and injured fifteen others on March 12, 2015. The protesters were attacked for refusing "the Houthi coup" on the state. The Houthi insurgents' abuse on peaceful protesters continued at an increasingly violent pace in the areas they controlled. These oppressive practices are still ongoing, targeting protesters in Sana'a, including the weekly protests of prisoners' mothers in Sana'a. On November 21, 2016, the Houthi militia and Saleh-affiliated forces oppressed hundreds of soldiers and security affiliates who gathered around al-Tahrir square in the center of Sana'a which falls under their control. They demanded

the coup authorities (Saleh/Houthi) to pay their salaries after half of their salaries were deducted to finance their fights. According to some participants in the protest, the Houthi militia suppressed the protest and attacked the participants with truncheons, stocks of their guns, and fired live bullets resulting



in casualties. The participants confirmed that the Houthi militia kidnapped some of the protesters and took them to an unknown location. At the same day and in front of the presidential palace in Sana'a, the Houthi dispersed a protest gathering by members of the Judiciary System who were calling for the release of a judge kidnapped earlier by the Houthi. The consistent suppressive practices by the Houthi militia and Saleh-affiliated forces has ignited the armed violence in the country. They closed all the doors on the Yemenis to use peaceful tools to confront the Houthi armed violence, especially with firm control of the Houthi is over most of the state's civil and military sectors.

Political Assassinations

In such circumstances, political assassination crimes became rampant following the coup by the Houthis and their allies on Hadi's internationally-recognized authorities. The assassinations also targeted political leaders from the Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah) and others thought to be affiliated with the moderate wing of the Houthi group. In January 2014, unknown armed individuals assassinated Dr. Ahmed Sharaf al-Deen by shooting him with live bullets when he drove his car from his house onto one of the public roads. He was a prominent leader in the Al-Haq Party and a representative of the Ansar Allah movement (Houthi armed group) in the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen. On November 2, 2014, two armed individuals on

a motorcycle in the middle of the capital Sana'a killed Dr. Mohammed Abdulmalik al-Mutawakkil, 72, a prominent political figure close to the Houthi group and Assistant Secretary-General of the Popular Forces. The case was registered against unknown assassins and his family members appealed for their father's assassination not to be used for political purposes. A year before al-Mutawakkil's death, other two unknown armed individuals killed Abdul-Karim Jadbani in the same way, a parliamentarian and a supporter to the Houthis, on November 22, 2013.

In 18 November 2014, the assistant general secretary of the Islah party in Taiz city Sadeq Mansour al-Haidari was killed by a bomb placed in his car in the al-Masbah area in Taiz. On March 30, 2015, a number of Houthi armed members killed Jamal al-Ayani, an Islah leader in Hodeida city, after a protest took place in the city and was suppressed by the Houthi and Saleh-affiliated forces with live bullets. On May 21, 2015, Houthi insurgents assassinated

Abdo al-Modomi in Sana'a, an active member in the Islah party. Eyewitnesses confirmed that some Houthi armed members assassinated al-Modomi in al-Sunainah neighborhood after he received threats from them.

On April 23, 2016, two armed persons on a motorcycle, believed to be from the Houthi group, killed Hassan al-Ya'ari, the head of the Shoura Council in Islah in Tamar. He was shot dead in front of his house after praying the noon prayer in the mosque. Al-Ya'ari was earlier kidnapped by Houthi insurgents in Tamar city, which is under Houthi control. On November 2, 2014, two armed persons on a motor cycle in the center of the capital Sana'a killed Dr.

Mohammed Abdulmalik al-Mutawakkil, 72, a prominent political figure close to the Houthi group and the assistant secretary general of the Party of Union of Popular Forces. President Hadi, who was under house arrest by the Houthi, ordered an investigation into this incident but no results were announced by the appointed entity responsible for the investigation.

No security or responsible entity in the de facto authority of the Houthi groups announced any investigation into the assassination crimes or the unlawful killings of peaceful protesters, citizens, and oppo-

nent political leaders by the Houthi armed insurgents. In the absence of the justice system and transparent investigations, security officials loyal to Saleh and the Houthi groups made political accusations about the assassination and the random attacks that happened after September 2014. These accusations were employed to get rid of their political opponents and distract the attention from the demand of legal investigation.

*In
Rada'a, the US
drones used as air coverage
for the Houthi territorial advances
towards tribal areas and at the
same time AQAP took advantage of the
opportunity when the tribes felt that
the Americans were supporting Houthi
militia and this contributed to the
propaganda of the AQAP to justify
its terrorist operations.*

Random Terror Attacks

The Houthi group has control over the apparatus of the state with support from the security forces affiliated to the former President Saleh, pushing Yemen into a chaos unprecedented in its recent history. Civilians are the group paying the highest price as they are unprotected from the strikes operation and the random attacks. Sana'a has witnessed bloody attacks targeting civilians with no declaration of the investigation results, or holding the involved suspects accountable. In January 2015, unidentified people placed an improvised explosive device in a car in front of the Police College in Sana'a targeting hundreds of the new applicants to the college. The car bomb killed 42 and injured 86 people, according to the Yemeni Ministry of Interior. No entity claimed responsibility for the attack, causing speculation about who is responsible. Conflicting statements were announced by the first security officer appointed by the Houthi, General Abdulrazag al-Moyad, the head of the Capital Secretariat police department. Following the incident, General al-Moyad said that he arrested the people responsible for the explosion consisting of five members, one of whom is the main perpetrator. He promised to disclose their names "within hours". This did not happen. He then declared that he reserved disclosing the names for reasons concerning the investigation. He then told Almasirah Channel, a Houthi-affiliated TV channel, that the accused perpetrators studied in Iman University, joined the religious studies of Damaj Center, a Salafi Center in Sa'adah, and participated in the war in Amran. This was denied by the Iman University, which was occupied and their property looted by the Houthi group right after their takeover. The University called for a transparent investigation into the accusations and to bring the criminals to the justice. On December 16, 2014, an attack killed nine female students of the Khansa school in Rada' city and injured eighteen others. This is an ambiguous attack because of the confusing stories of the details of the attack and the responsible entity, in the absence of any trusted mechanism to investigate the crime scene. The site is under the control of the Saleh-Houthi allied forces. Houthi groups and the security authorities said that the perpetrators are members of the AQAP, who launched an attack with two car bombs at a nearby Houthi site and checkpoint. But one of the cars exploded near a student bus, according to the same statement.

Human rights organizations documented many horrific violations of human rights committed by the government forces in Aden and Mukalla cities, including killing and tortures.

The capital Sana'a and other cities witnessed suicide attacks causing hundreds of deaths and injuries, including women and children. These attacks targeted mosques and religious events organized by the Houthi. The Islamic State in Yemen (ISIS) claimed responsibility for some of the attacks. On October 9, 2014, at least 45 people, amongst them four children, were killed and other tens were injured in a suicide attack in al-Tahrir square where Houthi protesters were protesting against Abdu Rabu Hadi. On December 31, 2014, a suicide bomber with an explosive belt attacked a celebration of the Houthi of the Prophet Mohammed in Ibb city. The attack killed more than 26 people and injured 48 others, most of them civilians. The explosion attacks continued as ISIS in Yemen declared its responsibility. On March 20, 2015, explosions took place at Badr Mosque and Al-Hashoush Mosque in Sana'a, Houthi-affiliated mosques at the same time, despite being in different areas. It resulted in killing 142 people, amongst them religious Houthi senior clerks including Dr. Al-Murthadha al-Mahatwari. 351 other people were killed. The political employment of the violent crimes and the random killings was clear during these attacks. The political opponents were accused of plotting these attacks - including random killings, political assassination, the suicide bombing attacks targeting civilians, Houthi events and celebrations and the organized armed operations directed towards the military movement by the armed Popular Uprising and Army Units affiliated with the internationally-recognized president Abdul Rabu Hadi.

The interim capital Aden witnessed a series of suicide and random attacks and assassinations targeting military leaders and troops affiliated with the Arab coalition. These attacks and assassinations also attacked security leaders following Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi and causing on some occasions deaths amongst civilians. The level of assassinations increased incredibly after Aden was freed from the Houthi insurgents and Saleh-affiliated forces. Aden was freed on July 2015 in a series of massive military operation by Yemeni forces under the umbrella of the Popular Forces affiliated with President Hadi and with the support of the Arab coalition troops. On October 6, 2015, four consecutive explosions took place in Aden targeting the Al-Qasr Hotel, which was being used by the government as a temporary working space. These explosions resulted in the killing of 15 people, amongst them four Emirati soldiers and one Saudi soldier. On December 6, 2015, the Aden governor Brigade Ja'far Moham-



Photo: Akram Al Rasiny

med Sa'ad and eight other companions were killed in an envoy by a car bomb. He was passing by the Telecommunication Building in the Goldmoor area in al-Towahi neighborhood in Aden city, south Yemen. On January 31, 2016, the dead body of the Salafi Imam Samhan Abdulaziz Rawi, was found after his death by the Suzuki round between Shaikh Othman and Koor Maksar districts in Aden city. Traces of torture was found on his body. He was kidnapped by unknown armed people who then killed him. On February 28, 2016, unknown armed people assassinated the Salafi sheikh Abdul-Rahman al-Adani by shooting him with bullets in his way out of his house to the Mosque in Al-Faioh area, in Lahj city nearby Aden city. The armed attack occurred in an elderly residential home in al-Sheikh Othman neighborhood in Aden on March 2016. Such an incident is rare; unknown armed people sieged the whole house and started firing randomly, killing more than 16 people including the guard, nurses from the Netherlands (four were killed), and elderly inhabitants. On March 5, 2016, armed unidentified individuals killed the Al-Tawahi Police Chief in Aden governorate, Col. Salem al-Milqat. On March 25, 2016, three car bombs exploded in different areas of Aden city, killing 26 people.

On March 28, 2016, at least 61 people were killed by a suicide attack targeted at the army recruitment center belonging to the Yemeni army in Aden city. On April 10, 2016, unknown armed individuals killed the general secretary of the local council of the Al-Mansoura area in Aden City, Ahmed al-Haidar, and his son. On April 29, 2016, unidentified shooters killed the head of the traffic office of Aden city, Brigadier Marwan Abdu, by shooting him with bullets in the Almomdarah area. On May 6, unidentified individuals killed the head of the central prison in Aden, Wahad Awan. On May 6, 2016, unknown individuals on motorcycles assassinated the head of the central security of Aden governorate Wahb Najeeb Ahmed Awan and one of his relatives in the Al-Mansoura area, where the Central Security prison is located in Aden. On May 23, 2016, at least 41 people were killed in two suicide attacks targeting military recruits in military camps of the private forces in the Al-Sawlaban area in Aden city. On July 6, 2016, a suicide attack targeted the gate of the military camp of the private security forces in the Al-Sawlaban area of Aden city, killing ten people. On August 15, unknown armed individuals killed the Is-lahi leader and Imam of al-Rida mosque Saleh Hulais. On August 26, 2016, unidentified armed individuals killed the former leader of the Popular Resistance in Aden, Ghassan Salim al-Jafri. On August 29, 2016, at least 70 people were killed by a car bomb targeting a site holding prisoners. This site was supervised by the Al-Mihdhar Kataib, an armed group of Salafists loyal to the government forces, in Al-Sanafir neighborhood in Al-Mansoura Al-Mansourah area in Aden. The attack happened while it was being used as a center of military recruits. On December 10, 2016, at least 48 people were killed in a suicide explosion targeted at a number of soldiers at the gate of the military camp of the private security forces in Al-Sawlaban area in Aden city. A week later, on December 18, 2016, more than 52 people were killed in a suicide attack targeting a gathering for the soldiers of the private security forces in front of the residence of the head of the private security forces in Aden, while they were waiting to receive their salaries. Rights Radar monitored during the year of 2016 more than 24 assassination incidents, 22 terrorist attacks in Aden, which was the main target for all the terrorist attacks that happened in Yemen during the year of 2016. It resulted in the killing of hundreds of military personnel and civilians. The total number of casualties arising from those incidents in 2016 reached 371 people in Aden alone, while around 25 people were killed either by assassination or terrorist attacks in 2015. Meanwhile approximately 322 people were killed during the armed confrontation between the popular resistance's forces and the Houthis and Saleh forces during the four-month period of the Houthis and Saleh controlling Aden.

Houthi Violations Against Civilians

Activists and human rights organizations documented horrifying human rights violations committed during the armed events witnessed in Yemen in early 2015. Accusations were directed against many parties, especially the Houthis and the former President Saleh's affiliated forces. These violations were committed during their territorial military expansion towards the cities. They oppressed armed operations encountered along their expansion with a complete absence of governmental and non-governmental institutions responsible for investigating in these incidents.

In Aden province, Wogood Foundation for Human Security, a local human rights organization, documented 1,998 cases of anti-civilian violation attacks committed by the Houthi and Saleh-affiliated forces during their military territorial advance to Aden city. This number included 322 deaths, 256 injuries, along with other humanitarian violations against civilians.

On May 6, 2015, Houthi and Saleh-affiliated forces committed a humanitarian massacre against the civilians who were trying to escape the war in Aden. The forces showered with bullets the crowd of civilian people who were waiting to flee the area on a boat, they were on the edge of the port of Towahi in Aden.

Many human rights organizations reported immense difficulties that prevented the documentation of this incident, and getting the precise number of total fatalities. However, they were able to document horrifying testimonies from the survivors. Amnesty International said that it has collected some evidence of the use of mortars on civilians by the Houthis. They also attacked two medical doctors and medical institutions in Aden city. In related cases, Amnesty International said that scores of civilians were killed as a result of the anti-aircraft munitions shot by the Houthi group. In Dar Sa'ad, Aden province, Houthi and Saleh militias targeted a local market with rocket propelled grenades on July 20, 2015. They killed 57 civilians, including 12 children and six women, and injured 215 others; 25 children and 15 women, according to al-Khadhar Laswar,

the general manager of the health office in Aden city. In Sana'a, the anti-aircraft munitions were shot by the Houthi militia to respond to the Arab coalition airstrikes and exploded on residential neighborhoods killing civilians and deforming others. Amnesty International quoted a doctor from al-Thawarah Hospital in Sana'a saying that the overwhelming majority (around 90 per cent) of the received cases of the wounded patients had been injured by the anti-aircraft munitions. Amnesty International stated that its staff spoke to the people from the neighborhoods and the medical staff at nine of the city hospitals. They all confirmed that the

The intensive strikes of the Saudi-led Arab coalition targeting the military camps of the Houthi and Saleh loyalists in Sana'a and other cities since March 26, 2015 resulted in great human rights violations. It caused deaths and injuries amongst civilians and destroyed a big part of the private and public infrastructure.

"leading cause of casualties in the capital" is due to the anti-aircraft weapons. However, the attacks led by the Saudi-led coalition on the weapons depots in residential areas caused casualties amongst civilians as a result of the explosions of those depots. Besides casting a severe siege on Taiz forced by the Houthi/Saleh forces, they have also carried out random and fatal shelling on residents and the residential neighborhoods in the city. Thousands of casualties were reported, according to estimates of human rights organizations.

The Coalition for Humanitarian Relief in Taizz - a coalition of several non-governmental organizations in Taizz- said that the random shelling on the residential neighborhoods in Taizz and the surrounding villages by the Houthi and Saleh forces resulted in killing 1,231 civilians including women and children during the year 2016. In 2015, The Humanitarian Centre for Rights and Development, a human rights NGO, issued a report stating that the troops of Saleh and Houthis killed approximately 1,535 civilians in Taizz city for the period from March 25 to November 30, 2015. The Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV) in Yemen, which consisted of ten Yemeni human rights NGOs, said that the random shelling over the residential and populated neighborhoods in various areas in some Yemeni cities by the Houthi/Saleh forces resulted in killing 10,668 civilians including thousands of women and children during the period from January



1, 2015 until December 31, 2016, as they killed 8,202 civilians during 2015 and 2,466 civilians during 2016. Taiz faced bloody massacres committed by the Houthi and Saleh troops in Taiz City. Yet, the worst two were on October 21 and 22, 2015 when more than 10 Katyusha rockets were fired on Jamal Street, markets, and crowded residential neighborhoods. This resulted in the deaths of more than 15 civilians including three children and injuring more than 75; 12 are children whose injuries are critical. In Taiz city, Rights Radar documented 84 incidents of random shelling committed by the Houthi and Saleh militias against civilians between May 22, 2015 until January 5, 2016. The massive shelling resulted in killing 813 civilians including 303 children and 87 women. Some of the neighborhoods targeted by the Houthi and Saleh forces in Taiz city are: Jamal street, al-Kawthar, Al-Masbah, Al-Dahi, Tha'abat, Al-Nusairiah, al-Salakhanah, al-Dharbah, Osaifirah, Al-Ikhwah, Wadi al-Qadhi, Al-Bab Al-Kabeer, Al-Bara'im school, Al-Jahmaliah, Wadi al-Madam, Delux, al-Dhabu'ah, Al-Awadhi, Al-Jumhori, Al-Rawdhah, and al-Moghtarebeen. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights decried the killing in a statement and hold the armed popular committee belonging to al-Houthi responsible. It also expressed its concerns over the deteriorating humanitarian situations in Taiz city, as a result of the

setup of checkpoints installed by the Houthis and Saleh forces since April 2015. Houthi and Saleh-affiliated forces restricted the mobility of the civilians from and to Taiz city and controlled it by the roads leading to it. They also cut the main roads from Sana'a, Aden, Ibb, Lahj and Hodeida. On June 21, 2016, the Houthi/Saleh forces fired artillery shells targeting a residential gathering in Wadi al-Madam in Taiz. They killed more than four civilians including three women. They are: Fahd Mahmmed Qassim al-Fakih, 45, Mona Mohammed Othman al-Youfsifi, 44, Ishraq Mohammed Ali al-Shaibani, 35, Samar Mahmmed Ali al-Shaibani, 35, Khawlah al-Shaibani, 13. Three others were injured. In June 2016, Houthi and Saleh forces escalated their random shelling on the residential neighborhood in Taiz, and at the same time the Kuwait UN-sponsored peace negotiations began. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has strongly condemned the series of rocket attacks and the mortar shells on many residential neighborhoods, and markets in Taiz city. These attacks took place between June 3 and 8, 2016, killing 18 civilians, including seven children and the injury of 68 others. Since the armed confrontations started in Taiz city in April 2015, no day passes without casualties occurring in Taiz as a result of the random shelling by the Houthi and Saleh forces either by mortars or shooting people.

The Arab Coalition Violations Against Civilians

On another front, the Arab coalition forces are accused by local and international human rights organizations of perpetrating large violations against civilians including women and children. Local and international human rights NGOs warned of using the cities and the civilian's residences as lawful targets by the Saudi-led coalition forces with no discrimination. The strikes targeted schools, hospitals and residences amongst other civilian institutions. The coalition denied some of the allegations against it and acknowledged some of its operations that reached some civilian sites by mistake which killed and injured civilians. The coalition promised to run an investigation and took some procedures to compensate but until the end of 2016, nothing has been done in this regard.

For example, 27 people were killed from the family of Abdullah Ali Al-Ibbi, most of them women and children, by the Saudi Arabian-led coalition strikes on their houses on May 6, 2015 in Sa'adah city on the Saudi border. Only the father and three other family members survived.

This airstrike is one of many others launched by the coalition targeting civilian targets, despite the claims of the coalition that their strikes only target military targets of the Houthi rebels and the Saleh-affiliated forces. The airstrikes targeted many civilian locations including markets, residential gatherings, petrol stations and infrastructures, which is a serious violation of the laws of war and the rules of engagement. On October 26, 2015, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) claimed that some of its hospitals were attacked by the coalition fire jets resulting in casualties. Subsequently, MSF decided to evacuate all of its medical cadres from six hospitals and medical centers in Sa'adah and Hajjah governorates. MSF justified that some of its

medical institutions were targeted by the Saudi-led coalition airstrikes and did not accept the coalition assurances. The organization said in an online statement on its website that "Following the August 15 aerial bombing of Abs Hospital in Yemen's Hajjah governorate, which killed 19 people and injured 24, the international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has decided to evacuate its staff from the hospitals it supports in Sa'adah and Hajjah governorates in northern Yemen." It also explained that MSF withdrew its staff members from Haydan, Raze, Al Gamhouri and Yasnim hospitals in Sa'adah governorate and Abs and Al Gamhouri hospitals in Hajjah governorate, stating "The airstrike on Abs Hospital was the fourth and the deadliest attack on an MSF-supported medical facility during this war, while there have been numerous attacks on other health facilities all over Yemen".

On March 30, 2015, an airstrike launched by the coalition killed 29 people, at least, in Al-Mazraq, an IDPs' camp in Hajjah city, north Yemen, near by the Saudi borders, according to international human rights organization and UN agencies. International Organization for Migration said that the number of casualties reached 45 people. Pablo Marco, the operational manager of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), said that MSF's hospital received 34 injured people. The spokesperson of the coalition denied targeting the IDPs' Camp, while the Yemen's foreign minister, Riyadh Yasin, accused the Houthi of committing the attack on the camp. On October 30, 2016, Houthi declared that 65 people were killed and other tens were injured due to an airstrike by the coalition on a prison belongs to the judiciary and security management compound in al-Zaidiah area, in Hodeida city—located at the coasts of the Red Sea (West of Yemen). Rights Radar reported that the Saudi-led Arab coalition's fighter jets attacked the buildings of the prison and the security management in Al-Zaidiah area, north Hodeida, with three airstrikes. Residents in the area told Rights Radar that this security building was supervised by the Houthis and used for their periodic meetings. The building's rooms was crowded with an estimated number of 100 prisoners. Most

During 2016, Rights Radar monitored 24 assassination cases and 22 terrorist attacks resulted killing 371 people in Aden only, where all terrorist incidents took place in Yemen in 2016.

of the prisoners were civilians, abducted by the Houthis and imprisoned in this building and taken as human shields. Survivors of the airstrikes told Rights Radar that the prisoners attempted to escape after the first airstrike calling for the prison's guards to release them but there was no response. The militias seemed determined to use them as human shields. The coalition denied targeting the prison but it confirmed attacking a meeting of Houthi officials in the security building. On May 12, 2015, the Saudi-led coalition committed a horrible incident by attacking a local market in Zabid city in Hodeida governorate, south of Yemen. The airstrikes killed 71 people and injured other 100. Local resources said that the airstrikes

The JIAT's spokesperson Mansour Ahmed Al-Mansour said that the investigations have already started on the claims of the coalition's violation during its operations in Yemen. The team began investigating some of these incidents and issued reports concerning eight claims against the coalition. Al-Mansour spoke in a news briefing on August 4, 2016 that the "JIAT's work in assessing the accidents depends on ensuring the legal aspects of target operations that are compatible with the international law, and on using the American and British mechanism to assess accidents in addition to the law of armed conflict, he JIAT prepares a report for each individual case, including the facts, circumstances surrounding each



targeted a building used by the Houthi, which is nearby the local market located directly on the main street of Zabid city. On July 24, 2015, the coalition's fighter jets attacked a residential city in al-Makha, a coastal city in Taiz governorate, south of Yemen. As a result, around 102 civilians were killed and other tens of people were injured. In early 2016 the Arab coalition created an independent body named Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) in consisted of 14 members with solid military and legal experiences. Some of its members are from the Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, according to state-owned Saudi Press Agency.

accident, backgrounds, timings, lessons learned, recommendations and future actions to be taken," according to SPA. The Arab coalition questioned the validation of the accusations holding the coalition responsible for firing airstrikes on civilian targets during the war. But the coalition admitted that there were mistaken operations that killed civilians and it vowed to take the necessary measures to compensate the damage. But as of the end of 2016, the coalition has not taken any practical measures in this regard. The Arab coalition said that the claims of these organizations are characterized with hastiness as most of them are not present on the ground especially in Hajjah city (North east Sana'a)

where the coalition targeted the Houthi militia. These organizations claimed that tens of civilians were killed as a result. The deadliest attack was on a funeral gathering for the al-Rwaishan clan held in the Grand Hall in October 2016. The coalition launched double tap strikes on the hall, killing 140 people and wounding hundreds of others, according to Houthi sources. Amongst the casualties were military and security leaders loyal to the former president Saleh. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) issued an investigation and found that the bombing was carried out based on wrong information that the hall was filled with Houthi leaders. The Coalition Forces Command affirmed that it accepts the results of the investigation and expressed its “regret”

for the unintended mistake, and the coalition started taking the necessary measures to apply the recommendations. “The coalition command expresses its regret at this unintentional incident and the ensuing pain for victims’ families. The incident is not in line with the coalition’s objectives, namely protecting civilians and restoring safety and stability to Yemen,” read the statement. The JIAT team responsible for the investi-

gation said in the same statement “Because of non-compliance with coalition rules of engagement and procedures, and the issuing of incorrect information, a coalition aircraft wrongly targeted the location, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.” Beside the violation of human rights in Yemen by all local and regional conflict parties, the US continued its drone attacks targeting leaders of the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). However, these drones hit Islamist civilians and leaders of tribes who are active in the armed fight and the resistance of the Houthi, like what happened in Al-Baidha, Ma’rib, Shabwah and others. The coalition’s fire jets continued flying in many others areas in central and south Yemen. Human rights organizations confirmed that the US drone attacks in Yemen are still causing death and injuries

amongst civilians even after the statement of the former US President Barack Obama that drones will be deployed only to stop terrorists from gaining a foothold; only when there is an imminent threat and when there is no hope of capturing the wanted terrorists. He stated that a drone attack would only occur when there is “near certainty” that civilians won’t be harmed and there are no other governments capable of effectively addressing the threat. Rights Radar reported how the American drones served the Houthi territorial advance in Rada’a city’s villages, central Yemen. When the Houthi militants entered Qaifah tribal remote villages and mountainous areas in Rada’a, late

2014, they were met with some resistance from the tribes. Some of those tribe members are suspected as operatives with Al-Qaeda. When the Houthis confronted them, it was as part of the tribal resistance. The American drones started to target those tribes to attack the AQAP members. However, the drones became air coverage for the Houthi territorial advances, and at the same time the AQAP took advantage of



the opportunity when the tribes felt that the Americans were supporting Houthi militia group, and this contributed to the propaganda of the AQAP to justify its terrorist operations. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, a UK-based bureau, confirmed that the confirmed number of American drones on Yemen during the year 2016 reached 31, while there were between 11 to 12 potential strikes. Because of those drones, 88 to 123 people were killed (numbers from two distinct reports) and it was not mentioned if civilians were amongst them. Yet, some local sources reported that some civilians had been killed by the drones. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism confirmed that the American drones in 2015 reached 22 air strikes, along with 10 other possible airstrikes resulting in killing 75 to 103, amongst them seven civilians and two children.

Civilians Used as Human Shields

Photo: Azzam Alzubairi

In an unprecedented event, the Houthi militia kidnapped activists and political opponents and imprisoned them in unlawful prisons. These prisons posed a possible military threat to the coalition by being used as camps belonging to their opposing forces. The militia used the prisoners as human shields, fulfilling earlier threats of some loyalists to the Houthis and the former president Saleh that they would do this. After the announcement in April 2015 of the Islah party, an opponent party to the Houthis, of its support for the Saudi-led Arab coalition operations, the Houthi militants and Saleh-loyalist forces kidnapped Ameen al-Rajwai, a senior leader in Islah. They took him to an unknown location on April 3, 2015. He had been arbitrarily imprisoned since that day. On May 31, 2015, as a result of the tireless efforts of his family to find him, his dead body was found. His body was burned, deformed, had traces of burns and fractures when taken to Tamar General Hospital. He was identified by his children, who then disclosed the possibility that he was abused before being used as a human shield in the military site in Harran Mountain that was targeted by the Arab coalition fire jets more than once.

The latest strike on the Harran Mountain was on May 21, 2015 which led to the death of Rajawi, and other two journalists: Abdullah Qabeel, the reporter of the Yemen Shabab, an independent TV channel, and Yousef al-Izri, the correspondent of Suhail Channel, an Islah-affiliated TV channel. Qabeel and al-Izri were kidnapped by the Houthi militia on May 20 during their coverage of an event held by Houthi-opposing tribal members in Tamar city (100 kilometers south of Sana'a). The International Federation of Journalists called on the UN to investigate their killings. Rights Radar documented the death of at least eleven people who were victims used as human shields on Harran Mountain. The families and eyewitnesses said that the Houthi and Saleh-affiliated forces took Harran Mountain as a stronghold and a store for anti-aircraft weapons. They also used the site of Harran Park as a depot for weapons and as an unlawful prison for its opponents. These measures were carried out under the supervision of a Houthi leader called Abu Zaid Abdul-Moghni al-Tawoos, affiliated to the Houthi group in Sa'adah.

Killing in Cold Blood

The events did not stop at waging war in more than one city and targeting political opponents, journalists, and peaceful protesters, but it also included the killing of citizens. There were cases of horrifying executions of unarmed citizens in a way was not seen in Yemen before, which exposed a horrifying situation of disrespect to the right to life. Rights Radar and other human rights agencies reported other cases of unlawful execution in cold blood. These incidents happened at the military checkpoints, at petrol stations with queues of citizens (as a result of the shortage of oil), inside governmental and service delivery institutions and during house raids. In August 2016, the Houthi militia executed four tribal leaders from the Al Omar tribe after kidnapping them from their houses from Thi Na'im district in al-Baidha city (the center of Yemen). Sources close to the victims said that they found the four bodies of the tribal leaders thrown in an agricultural area in Al-Ma-lajim area in al-Baidha city. The tribal leaders are Sheikh Ahmed Saleh al-Amari, Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed al-Amari, Sheikh Saleh Salem Bana, and Saleh Ahmed Saleh al-Amri. In Ibb city in another independent incident, military forces affiliated to the Houthi groups and Saleh forces on April 14, 2016 sieged and raided the house of Basheer Shihrah. It sieged his house by military vehicles and immediately executed him in cold blood in front of his children and family despite his utter surrender. The eyewitnesses said that Basheer Shihrah came out of his house unarmed with his hands raised but the militia shot him dead. The militia stopped citizens who happened to be passing by as witnesses to certain incidents. They attacked a woman because she came out of her house with her child while the Houthi/Saleh forces were stealing a car driving passing by the old city. They also added that Shihrah corps terrified the citizens of Ibb city. According to local citizens, the Houthi militia executed Basheer because he refused to replace the Mosque's Imam with another Imam from the Houthi group.

The consistent suppressive practices by the Houthi militia and Saleh-affiliated forces has ignited the armed violence in the country. They closed all the doors on the Yemenis to use peaceful tools to confront the Houthi armed violence, especially with firm control of the Houthis over most of the state's civil and military sectors.

On March 17, 2016, the Houthi militants killed 16 kidnapped young prisoners from the Abdeen and Ghiras who were imprisoned in one of the Houthi's prisons in al-Talj in Sahar in Sa'adah. The Yemeni coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations (Yemeni Observer) said that the victims were executed with bullets to their heads. They took their bodies and put them underneath explosive materials that were exploded remotely, blowing their bodies to pieces. Two days after this incident, on March 19, the Houthi militia told the families of the victims that those young men were killed by an airstrike by the Arab coalition, although the coalition denied the Houthi's claims, and the Arab coalition said that they could document the victims' families' testimonies by calling them. In October 2014, the Houthi insurgents killed a pharmacist Wadhah al-Hitari in his pharmacy Dar Al-Dawa near the Republican Hospital in the capital Sana'a. He was killed in cold blood surrounded by witnesses and it was justified on the grounds of al-Hitari's beard. On December 2, 2014, the Houthi insurgents in the Ibb countryside killed Fakir Mohammed Abdul-Jalil, 28, in his house in front of his mother and sister when he was trying to hide in the clothes closet in his bedroom. The insurgents came because of a complaint from one of his relatives. They chased him and shot him dead in front of his family. On December 6, 2014, Hussain Mujali al-Abraqi, 15, was killed in Amran by one of the Houthi insurgents as the latter was disturbed by the car smoke from his big car when he was passing by a Houthi checkpoint. On May 2015, Houthi insurgents killed in cold blood Abdullah Faraj Mohammed Marzouq, from al-Hodeida governorate and Malik Abdullah Qasim al-Asakari, from Taiz city. They shot them dead inside the Passports Authority in the capital Sana'a and they injured four others. According to eyewitnesses who were able to capture the crime with a photograph published by media outlets, the Houthi started firing on a crowded line of citizens inside

the Passport and Immigration Authority in Sana'a who were waiting to receive their passports in front of the reception window, killing those in line and injuring others. On January 9, 2015, the Houthi militia killed a girl called Nuha Omar Qata'i after a random shooting in a petrol station in Hodeida city, east of the country. According to eyewitnesses, the girl Nuha Qata'i, who lived in a neighborhood in Hodeida, was waiting for her turn to fill her car with petrol when the Houthi armed militants shot live bullets random-

die rather than take them to hospital. Acts such as this show how they treat people's lives with disrespect and fail to take responsibility for the damage they cause. In al-Hada in Tamar, the Houthi militants killed a 12-year-old Mushil Mohammed Saleh Mushrif on December 10, 2016. He was killed in front of his classmates and teachers in al-Mohid school in Kalbat Makhdarat village after they refused to say the slogan of the Houthi (al-Sarkhah) during the celebration of the Prophet Mohammed. The militia were an-



photo: Dawood Alwabbani

ly inside the station, shooting her dead with a stray bullet. A day before, another young man named Noraddeen Saleh al-Ma'zabi, was killed by the bullets of the Houthi militants in one of the petrol stations in Hodeida after a conflict between him and one of the Houthis. The Houthi militants shot him with two bullets in his back that killed him. According to various sources many Hodeida citizens were killed in similar incidents in petrol stations in Hodeida. There have been incidents where the Houthis have killed civilians with their vehicles. Although perhaps not acting deliberately, they would leave the victims to

gry and opened their arms on the children, killing Mushil. The school students were terrified and shocked by the incident. On June 2016, the child Omro Khaled al-Buraihi was run over by one of the Houthi militant's vehicles in al-Hawban street, the eastern main entrance of Taizz city, killing him. There are many similar killings involving human rights abuses in Hazm al-Odain in Ibb city such as the Houthi militants running over a child and asking his family to bury him and to chant the Houthi slogan. In Madhbah neighborhood in Sana'a, the Houthis ran over 17-year-old Ra'ad Ali Ibrahim al-Raimi and left him bleeding to death.

Death by Torture



The torture wave increased systematically in the prisons under the Houthi and Saleh forces' control and in the Emirates Troop's prisons in some of the southern cities, which are less intensive. Some of the Yemeni activists released spoke about the bad treatment during their imprisonment and the torture they suffered. Some of the human rights organizations estimated that the death amongst civilians as a result of torture is up to 71 people in various areas in Yemen, in addition to two killed individuals in the state-affiliated prisons in Al Mukalla city. Different types of torture used are physical beating, electric shock, deprivation of family contact and legal help, and poor prison situations. In some of the Houthi prisons, a bargain is placed on the lives of the victims where a ransom is paid in return for their release. On June 2, 2016, the Houthi group released the body of Abdullah Saleh Abdul-Qawi al-Humaiqani following his death as a result of torture a few months af-

ter his kidnapping and arbitrary arrest in Al-Baidha city. In Ibb city, the deadly torture methods started early but these practices did not receive the media coverage relative to its magnitude. On February 7, 2016, one of the Ba'dan district citizens Mujahid Mohammed Hamad al-Zaidi was found dead in the Political Security Prison used by the Houthi militia as a prison for its opponents. Mujahid and his brothers were abducted and kept in the prison for more than 47 days. al-Zaidi's family said that their son was subjected to a brutal torture session leading to his death on the third day of his kidnap and the Houthi militia hid the news for about one month and half. Then they surprised the family with the news of their son's death, which they claimed was as the result of a heart attack. This allegation was denied by his brothers who were kidnapped with him and they confirmed that their brother was subjected to deadly torture. On February 24, 2016, the tribal leader Mohammed Zaid al-Sabil was tortured just one day after being kidnapped by the Houthi/Saleh forces in al-Qafr district north east Ibb city. According to eyewitnesses, brutal torture traces were apparent on his body which was under the hold of the Houthi militia for few days before handing it over to the victim's family, who received his dead body with severe torture traces. In a testimony made by the Yemeni Observatory, one of the relatives of the Sabil said: "The Houthi militia kidnapped my cousin Mohammed Zaid al-Sabil in al-Qafr district and tied him and dragged him on the floor alive and their vicious torture reached the extent of cutting his genital organ. We his cousins know the criminals and their leaders."

On January 29, 2016 the al-Jabri family received their kidnapped son Munif al-Jabri, 27, who died as result of the torture prisons affiliated to the Houthi groups and Saleh forces in Madhbah neighborhood in the north east of the capital Sana'a. al-Jabri's relatives said that Munif died as a result of being subjected to torture inside the prison in al-Karamah area in the Capital Secretariat of Sana'a where he was held by the Houthi and Saleh armed forces. The torture traces were visible all over his body when it was received by his family. His family was threatened not to raise their case through media outlets or human rights organizations. On November 20, 2015, Ali Hamoud Awdha, 33, a master graduate died after being brutally tortured by the Houthi

militants inside the Prison of the Security Management of Shibam district in Almahwait city. One of his relatives said that the armed forces of Saleh and Houthi kidnapped him after his return from pilgrimage after he was falsely accused of taking money in exchange for reporting the Houthi militias' movements in al-Mahwait city. He added that "they did not allow us to visit him for the last 20 days of his arrest and this is the period where he was brutally and physically tortured resulting in his death. The Houthis refused to give us his body until we signed a waiver for the legal case." On August 31, 2015, ordinary citizens from the al-Radhmah district found the bodies of Abdul-Kareem Muhsin al-Qahf and his son al-Migdad Abdul-Kareem al-Qahf thrown on the streets in Shezar Mountain in al-Sabbar district with torture traces. Trusted sources said that al-Qahf and his son were subjected to torture leading to their death inside one of the Houthi/Saleh forces' prisons in Yarim city, in the center of Yemen. The Houthi militia said that they kidnapped Al-Qahf and his son from their house after their advance and takeover of the district in August 2015 and arrested them in a private prison of the militia in Yarim city. They were subjected to brutal severe torture sessions before throwing their bodies on the street in Shizr Mountain. In early April 2015, Yemeni human rights organizations revealed that the Houthi militants made a massive termination campaign and executed soldiers following the Armored Brigade 33 in Al-Dali city. The executions killed at least seven soldiers because they refused to participate in the war on people and they decided to leave the military camp. According to some released victims, their colleagues were subjected to longer beatings and their bodies were hung upside down and tortured by electric shock and cigarette burns, pouring hot water over their bodies, threatening them with killings and raping their relatives, and were subjected to many mock executions. In the capital city Sana'a, human rights organizations reported the case of the killing of the Yemeni activist and teacher Saleh Awadh al-Bashri, 35, by torture in the Houthi prison. He was from Al-Haimah Al-Kharjah area in Sana'a and a father of seven children. He was kidnapped by the Houthi/Saleh forces with another three of his friends: Ali Tahir al-Fakih, Abdu-Jalil al-Sabari and Mansour al-Nidhami on February 11, 2015 after their participation in a peaceful celebration of the 2011 uprising and they were taken to an unknown location where they were subjected to all kinds of heinous torture. Then, their bodies were found in one of the streets of Sana'a on February 13, 2015. They were all

in a very bad condition and were taken to the hospital but Saleh al-Bishri died from the severe torture he received. The Houthi group keeps its affiliated prison with high level of secrecy with thousands of detained civilians, kidnapped by the militia in various areas and cities under its control. It is estimated that it has more than 8,000 prisoners and according to witnesses torture is used inside the prison in a brutal way leading to the deaths of tens of prisoners. The torture sessions carried out by the Houthi militia against the kidnapped prisoners is not a new practice. Human rights activists previously documented a number of violations in the Houthi prisons in Sa'adah, Hajjah and Amran in the north of Yemen. They claimed a huge number of violations and revealed shocking information about the torture stories and the situations of the prisoners. Additionally, the government forces affiliated to President Hadi declared in late April 2016 the regain of Mukalla, the capital of Hadhramout governorate, east Yemen, from the AQAP in a quick military session. These missions were carried out with the support of the Arab coalition troops and it said that it expelled the AQAP insurgents from the city after the AQAP controlled the area for more than a year. Saudi and Emirate troops participated alongside the Yemeni army in this quick military



army that targeted one of the main strongholds of the AQAP. After the flee of the AQAP from Mukalla city, human rights activists documented several violations and tortures committed by the government troops. On May 15, 2016, the death of Mahmmed Awadh Barahmah, the head in the popular resistance in Shabwah city, was announced in Mukalla city two days after being arrested from his house along with two of his brothers in ambiguous circumstances. A source close to the Barahma family said that his body was found in the morgue in Ibn Sina Hospital in Mukalla with traces of torture. The family of the victim refused to receive the body until it received a full detailed report about the ambiguous

circumstances in which he was died and who is responsible. The source said that the state army in Mukalla arrested Barahma and his brothers Waleed and Aidarous earlier from their houses in Bowaish area in Mukalla. They were arrested by an armed force consisting of four armed vehicles belonging to the Hadhrami Elite forces. They were taken to an unknown place and after two days, the body of Mohammed Awadh Barahma was found in the morgue of Ibn Sina with marks of torture on it. In a similar incident, Lutfi Juman Bafatim, known as Bele, died on June 17, 2016, as a result of severe torture by military forces affiliated to the president Hadi in Mukalla Hadhramout and was taken to an unknown location.



Recommendations

- Rights Radar calls upon the United Nations to provide technical support to the National Committee (NCIAVHR) assigned to investigate violations of human rights in Yemen in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council in Sept.24, 2015. The UN should demand all conflicting parties to provide the needed support to the (NCIAVHR) in Yemen to carry out its duties and to ensure the security of field staff and enable them to receive complaints, investigate the allegations and violations, collect information and evidence and visit all the targeted sites around the country.
- We call upon the international community to step up to its ethical and legal responsibilities for what is taking place in Yemen regarding the violation of human rights. The international community should make a greater effort to provide immediate support to civilians according to the international treaties and agreements especially Geneva agreement.
- The international community needs to put pressure on the Houthi group to stop its military operations against civilians and to stop the random shelling of the populations in Taiz city and other Yemeni governorates where confrontations are taking place between its people and the state troops. We demand the Houthi group to release all the detainees and immediately stop the torture and abide by the international human rights laws that protect human lives and preserve their dignity.
- We call on the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh to stop participating in the violation of human rights by using his loyal forces in the current war in Yemen where civilians are killed. He should be obliged to keep his party the General People Congress (GPC), which he heads, a civil party. He should cease using his loyal military troops and his party insurgents as an armed militia, lenient in committing human rights violations.
- The international community needs to ensure the Saudi-led Arab coalition's operations are not targeting innocent civilians in Yemen. In addition, the coalition should compensate all the coalition's victims affected by its air strikes in Yemen.
- The international community needs to ensure the military troops and the security forces loyal to the government of President Abd Rabu Mansour Hadi to abide by the law and the humanitarian and international treaties. They should avoid violating human rights whether during their armed confrontations with its opponents, during its practice of authority or inside the prison and detention centers. They should also hold the perpetrators of those violations accountable to avoid these practices becoming normalized within government without any repercussions.
- We call upon the popular resistance to commit to the rules of engagement and ensure its members respect the international humanitarian laws during the armed confrontation and avoid any violations of human rights.

RIGHTS RADAR

WHO WE ARE?

Rights Radar is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that monitors, promotes and defends human rights in the Arab world. It was founded by a group of Arab human rights defenders and activists. We monitor, document and report violations against human rights, as well as provide advocacy and legal support for victims and capacity building for human rights activists. We cover all topics and areas of human rights, including public liberties and freedom of expression, women's rights, children's rights, disability rights, prisoner rights, right to justice, refugee rights and fundamental rights.

Rights Radar works through a wide network of professional reporters and monitors on the ground, using the latest techniques in monitoring and documenting human rights cases.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- 1- Monitoring and documenting violations against human rights in the Arab World.
- 2- Providing advocacy and legal support for Arab victims of human rights.
- 3- Capacity building and leadership developing for Arab human rights activists.
- 4- Networking and communicating with international human rights organizations.

OUR VISION:

To provide excellence in monitoring and documenting the status of human rights in the Arab world.

OUR MISSION:

Rights Radar monitors and documents human rights abuses in the Arab world in order to reduce violations against human rights and track the perpetrators, advancing the principle of no-impunity. We do this using professional and proven method, providing advocacy and legal support for Arab victims of human rights violations, creating training opportunities for human rights' capacity building and leadership, as well as networking and communicating with international human rights organizations.

OUR VALUES:

- 1- Independency and balance.
- 2- Credibility and excellence.
- 3- Professionalism and responsibility.



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