



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Yemen: Security and humanitarian situation

Version 3.0

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Preface

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and policy guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the policy guidance contained within this note; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country information

COI in this note has been researched in accordance with principles set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#) and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), namely taking into account its relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability.

All information is carefully selected from generally reliable, publicly accessible sources or is information that can be made publicly available. Full publication details of supporting documentation are provided in footnotes. Multiple sourcing is normally used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, and that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided. Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source is not an endorsement of it or any views expressed.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Policy guidance

Updated: 30 April 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 That the general humanitarian situation in Yemen is so severe as to make removal a breach of Articles 15(a) and (b) of the European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 (the Qualification Directive); and/or
- 1.1.2 That the security situation in Yemen presents a real risk which threatens life or person such that removal would be in breach of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Parties on all sides of the conflict have reportedly been responsible for numerous serious human rights abuses (see [Nature of violence](#)).
- 2.2.2 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved in such activities then decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses, discretionary leave and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Assessment of risk

a. General points

- 2.3.1 In assessing risk, decision makers should first consider if the person faces persecution or serious harm for a Refugee Convention reason. See the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

- 2.3.2 It is only if the person does not qualify under the Refugee Convention that decision makers need to make an assessment of the need for protection firstly under Articles 15(a) and (b) of the Qualification Directive and, if that is unsuccessful, under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.
- 2.3.3 Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive applies only to civilians, who must be genuine non-combatants and not those who are party to the conflict. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.

b. Humanitarian situation

- 2.3.4 Yemen is experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis as a result of the ongoing conflict and the UN has declared a Level 3 (most severe) emergency response for the country as a whole, although the situation varies in different parts of the country (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.3.5 Yemen has a population of roughly 26 million. Of those, 80% (21.2 million) are assessed by the UN as needing humanitarian assistance. Those who are particularly vulnerable include an estimated 17.1 million people suffering from severe food shortages; 14 million people are malnourished, of whom 2.2 million are children who are acutely malnourished requiring urgent care; and 3.11 million people who are internally displaced. Basic services have been seriously affected with an estimated 14.5 million lacking access to safe water and sanitation and an estimated 14.8 million people with inadequate access to basic healthcare (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.3.6 Yemen is dependent on imports for nearly all food and medicine. However, most of the country remains difficult to access by humanitarian agencies because of continuing airstrikes, localised fighting and ongoing insecurity, and restrictions in freedom of movement (see [Humanitarian Access](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.3.7 Aid restrictions remain in place for areas not in control of the internationally recognised government – mainly in the north and central parts of Yemen – with the Houthi movement, supported by forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and other groups imposing restrictions on people and basic supplies from entering the contested areas. Humanitarian access to Aden, which is under the control of the government, is less restricted. On occasion, aid is delivered from the Aden area to other areas in need (see [Humanitarian access](#)).
- 2.3.8 While harsh, the humanitarian situation in Aden (and some areas in southern Yemen) does not in general breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. However, it may do for particularly vulnerable people and each case should be assessed on its individual merits. For factors to be considered, refer to the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).
- 2.3.9 Conditions in areas in the east, centre and north of the country, including Sana'a, are likely to breach Article 15(c) in most cases (see [Humanitarian situation](#), and [Humanitarian access](#)).
- 2.3.10 For guidance on Article 15 of the Qualification Directive see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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c. Security situation

- 2.3.11 Fighting continues throughout most of the country but the frontlines have been relatively fixed. Pro-government forces (those loyal to President Hadi) remain in control of Aden and the lowland areas of southern Yemen; the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh continue to control northern areas, including Sana'a and its surrounding provinces. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has, at times, controlled areas in the south and is in opposition to the Houthi/Saleh alliance. Daesh has been less successful at gaining territory but has undertaken offensives in the south, with bombings and assassinations of targets in Aden. At least 10,000 people have been killed since the conflict started in 2011 including over 4,000 civilians, some 1,200 of whom were children (see [Security situation](#)).
- 2.3.12 Government forces continue to advance the frontline in northern Yemen and, backed by the coalition, have escalated their military offensive against Houthi-held areas. Airstrikes continue to target the Houthi-held governorates with civilian casualties reported. The fighting remains heaviest in the southern central governorates of Taizz, Lahj and the northern governorates of Marib, Hajjah and Sa'ada (see [Nature of violence](#)).
- 2.3.13 There are reports of the use of indiscriminate and unlawful violence by both sides including the use of internationally banned cluster bombs, banned anti-personnel landmines and numerous and repeated attacks on civilian homes, hospitals, schools, markets and factories (see [Nature of violence](#)).
- 2.3.14 In the north, west and centre of the country as well as in some southwestern governorates levels of indiscriminate violence are currently likely to be at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that a person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person.
- 2.3.15 Aden still faces huge security challenges including a rise of targeted killings and the presence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh. However, it remains under the control of the Saudi-backed government. Just over 1 million of those who have been displaced by the conflict have returned to their areas of origin with nearly 70% of those returning to Aden, Sana'a or Taiz (see [Aden and southern Yemen](#) and [Internally Displaced Persons](#)).
- 2.3.16 Since July 2015 the situation has somewhat improved in Aden and some other parts of southern Yemen. Levels of violence in Aden do not match those witnessed in other parts of the country. The security situation in Aden and some areas of southern Yemen do not represent a general risk under Article 15(c). However decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk.
- 2.3.17 For information and guidance on Article 15(c), including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).
- 2.3.18 For further information and guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Internal relocation

- 2.4.1 Travel within Yemen is restricted by the high and fluctuating levels of violence through most of the country, as well as severe fuel shortages (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.4.2 Societal discrimination severely restricts the freedom of movement of women, although restrictions vary by location (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.4.3 Relocating to most parts of Yemen remains difficult. A number of Yemenis have relocated internally to flee combat zones – mostly to Taiz, Amran and Hajjah governorates.
- 2.4.4 In some cases relocation to Aden and surrounding areas may be feasible. However the volatile security environment and frequent violence harsh humanitarian situation and lack of livelihood opportunities mean that this will not be possible for many Yemeni citizens. Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person, including where they originate from in Yemen and where they will be returning to (see [Displacement and Internally Displaced Persons \(IDP's\)](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.4.5 For further information on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Certification

- 2.5.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.5.2 For further information and guidance on certification, see the [Appeals Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Yemen is in a state of armed conflict which has led to deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation. Airstrikes and armed clashes on the ground continue particularly in the east, north and centre of the country, in and around Sana'a.
- 3.1.2 Despite this, the situation has improved in Aden and some other parts of southern Yemen since July 2015, although Aden still faces security challenges including a rise of targeted killings and the presence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh
- 3.1.3 While harsh, the humanitarian situation in Aden and some other areas of southern Yemen is not in general at such a level as to breach Article 15 of the Qualification Directive. However, it may do so for vulnerable people (e.g. single women or disabled people, etc.). Each case should be assessed on its individual merits.

- 3.1.4 In the north, west and centre of the country the humanitarian conditions are likely, in many cases, to breach Article 15 of the Qualification Directive. Each case will need to be considered on its individual merits.
- 3.1.5 The security situation in Aden and some areas of southern Yemen in general, does not represent a general risk under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive but particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances or profile might, nevertheless, place them at risk.
- 3.1.6 The security situation in other parts of Yemen is in general likely to meet the threshold of Article 15(c).
- 3.1.7 Relocation to Aden and surrounding areas may be feasible in some cases depending on the particular circumstances. Internal relocation to other areas of Yemen is unlikely to be a viable option for most people although it may be for some, depending on their particular circumstances.
- 3.1.8 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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Country information

Updated: 24 April 2017

4. Background to the conflict

- 4.1.1 BBC News article 'Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?' dated 14 October 2016 reported that:

'The conflict has its roots in the failure of the political transition that was supposed to bring stability to Yemen following an uprising that forced its long-time authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to hand over power to Mr Hadi, his deputy, in November 2011. Mr Hadi struggled to deal with a variety of problems, including attacks by al-Qaeda, a separatist movement in the south, the continuing loyalty of many military officers to Mr Saleh, as well as corruption, unemployment and food insecurity.

'The Houthi movement, which champions Yemen's Zaidi Shia Muslim minority and fought a series of rebellions against Mr Saleh during the previous decade, took advantage of the new president's weakness by taking control of their northern heartland of Saada province and neighbouring areas.

'Disillusioned with the transition, many ordinary Yemenis - including Sunnis - supported the Houthis and in September 2014 they entered the capital, Sanaa, setting up street camps and roadblocks.

'In January 2015, the Houthis reinforced their takeover of Sanaa, surrounding the presidential palace and other key points and effectively placing Mr Hadi and his cabinet ministers under house arrest. The president escaped to the southern port city of Aden the following month.

'The Houthis and security forces loyal to Mr Saleh then attempted to take control of the entire country, forcing Mr Hadi to flee abroad in March 2015. Alarmed by the rise of a group they believed to be backed militarily by regional Shia power Iran, Saudi Arabia and eight other mostly Sunni Arab states began an air campaign aimed at restoring Mr Hadi's government. The coalition received logistical and intelligence support from the US, UK and France.'¹

- 4.1.2 In its Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Yemen for 2016, the US State Department stated 'Civilian authorities did not maintain effective control over security forces. The government exercised limited control over military and security forces due to Houthi-Saleh rebel control over most of the security apparatus and state institutions. Competing family, tribal, party, and sectarian influences also reduced government authority. The conflict between Houthi-Saleh rebels and forces loyal to the internationally recognized Hadi-led government continued throughout the year. Saudi Arabia and a coalition of other states continued air and ground operations

¹ BBC News, Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?, 14 October 2016
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423> [date accessed 23 January 2017]

against the Houthi-Saleh rebels. A UN-led peace process involving the government, the Houthis, and Saleh's GPC did not produce a peace agreement or a sustained cessation of hostilities. As of November the Hadi-led government had re-established a steady presence in Aden as well as an intermittent presence in some other governorates but had not returned to the capital Sana'a and remained unable to re-establish fully the rule of law in the territory it holds.²

- 4.1.3 For a full timeline of events please see the [BBC news Yemen profile-Timeline](#)³.

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5. Humanitarian situation

5.1 Food security

- 5.1.1 The UN has declared a Level 3 (most severe) emergency response for Yemen⁴.
- 5.1.2 Congressional Research Service's report of November 2016 noted that: 'The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is severe, with 80% (21.2 million) of Yemen's population in need of humanitarian assistance. According to the World Health Organization, documented cases of cholera have reached over 1,400 due to damage to infrastructure and lack of access to clean water and sanitation. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 14 million Yemenis are malnourished, and that 370,000 children are estimated to be severely malnourished or starving, particularly in rural areas. According to the World Food Program, almost half of all children in Yemen are stunted in growth due to chronic malnutrition.'⁵
- 5.1.3 In December 2016 UNICEF reported that: 'Nearly 2.2 million children in Yemen are acutely malnourished and require urgent care. At least 462,000 children suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), a drastic increase of almost 200 per cent since 2014. An additional 1.7 million children suffer from Moderate Acute Malnutrition.'⁶
- 5.1.4 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) noted that: 'About 3.3 million children and pregnant or lactating women are acutely malnourished, including 462,000 children under 5 suffering from

² US State Department, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016 - Yemen, 3 March 2017 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265528> [date accessed 22 March 2017]

³ BBC News Yemen profile- timeline, updated 21 November 2016 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704951> [date accessed 23 January 2017]

⁴ OCHA, Emergencies, undated, <http://www.unocha.org/where-we-work/emergencies> [date accessed 27 February 2017]

⁵ Congressional Research Service, Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention, 16 November 2016 <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

⁶ UNICEF, News note- Malnutrition amongst children in Yemen at an all-time high, warns UNICEF, 12 December 2016 https://www.unicef.org/media/media_93868.html [date accessed 31 January 2017]

severe acute malnutrition. This represents a 57 per cent increase since late 2015 and threatens the lives and life-long prospects of those affected.⁷

5.1.5 The UN news Centre reported in February 2017 that:

‘The number of food insecure people in Yemen has risen by three million in seven months, with an estimated 17.1 million people – more than two-thirds of the entire population of 27.4 million – now struggling to feed themselves, according to a joint assessment by three United Nations agencies.

‘Of the 17.1 million food-insecure people, about 7.3 million are considered to be in need of emergency food assistance, according to the preliminary results of the Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment, which attributed the rapid deterioration of the conditions to the ongoing conflict.’⁸

5.1.6 On 13 March 2017, after a visit to Yemen by Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) stated:

‘Cousin [...] pleaded with the warring parties and authorities in Aden and Sana’a for access to reach hungry people who will die if they do not receive food and nutrition support. “Humanitarians and aid workers are making a difference in Yemen as they have prevented Yemen from slipping into a famine until now,” said Cousin. “The challenge is that there are areas that are inaccessible where people are severely food insecure. These are the pockets that are at serious risk of people dying of hunger.” [...]“The numbers tell us the story, with over 17 million people who are food insecure and approximately seven million people severely food insecure,[...]“It is a race against time, and if we do not scale up assistance to reach those who are severely food insecure, we will see famine-like conditions in some of the worst-hit and inaccessible areas which means that people will die.” As the poorest country in the region, Yemen has suffered from decades of chronic food insecurity, and the situation has deteriorated rapidly in the last two years due to the ongoing conflict.’⁹

5.1.7 On 1 March 2017, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC], a coalition of humanitarian organizations, published a summary of its findings related to food insecurity in Yemen which listed ‘ Worst affected Governorates: Out of 22 governorates, Seven Governorates are in IPC Phase 4 (emergency) – Lahej, Taiz, Abyan, Sa’ada, Hajjah, Al Hodaidah and Shabwah. Ten Governorates are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) – Aden, Amran, Dhamar, Sana’a Governorate, Sana’a city, Ibb, Marib, Raymah, Al Mahwit

⁷ UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan, January 2017 <http://ochayemen.org/hrp-2017/> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

⁸ UN News Centre, Yemen: As food crisis worsens, UN agencies call for urgent assistance to avert catastrophe, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56143#.WM_tY6JFeM8, 10 February 2017 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56143#.WKR0Jvm8PMo> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

⁹ World Food Programme Appeals for Access and Resources to Prevent Famine in Yemen 13 March 2017 <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-appeals-access-and-resources-prevent-famine-yemen> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

and Hadramout, and three Governorates are in IPC Phase 3!- Al Jawf, Al-Dale'e and Al Bayda.¹⁰

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5.2 Water, sanitation and hygiene

5.2.1 BBC news reported in December 2016 that:

'The restrictions on imports of fuel - essential for maintaining the water supply - combined with damage to pumps and sewage treatment facilities, also mean that 14.4 million people now lack access to safe drinking water or sanitation. People have been forced to rely on untreated water supplies and unprotected wells, placing them at risk of life-threatening illnesses. An outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea was declared in October [2016]. As of 24 November [2016], 103 cases of cholera had been confirmed and 76 cholera-associated deaths reported.'¹¹

In January 2017 UNOCHA reported that: 'An estimated 14.5 million people require assistance to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation, including 8.2 million who are in acute need. This represents an increase of 8 per cent since late 2014, and the severity of needs has intensified.'¹²

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5.3 Healthcare

5.3.1 The UN General Assembly report of 4 August 2016 stated that:

'Since August 2015, residents in Taizz have witnessed a serious deterioration of the health situation and a near collapse of the health system as a result of the blockade imposed by the Popular Committees. In August 2015, the Taizz health office reported that, with the exception of the emergency unit and the kidney ward at the Thawra and Al-Jumhurri hospitals, all six public hospitals were no longer operational. Smaller private hospitals with limited capacity have been overwhelmed with the needs of those injured during the fighting. Furthermore, an outbreak of dengue fever exacerbated an already dire health situation for civilians stuck in Taizz; the Taizz health office reported 813 cases of dengue fever during August 2015.'¹³

5.3.2 UNICEF noted that: 'Less than a third of the country's population has access to medical care. Less than half of health facilities are functional. Health workers have not been paid their wages for months and aid agencies are

¹⁰ IPC Analysis Summary of Findings situation March to July 2017 – Yemen, 1 March 2017 http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Yemen_AcuteFI_Situation_March-July2017_ENversion.pdf [date accessed 22 March 2017]

¹¹ BBC news, Yemen conflict: How bad is the humanitarian crisis? 6 December 2016 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34011187> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

¹² UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan, January 2017 <http://ochayemen.org/hrp-2017/> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

¹³ United Nations General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Yemen, 4 August 2016 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/172/38/PDF/G1617238.pdf?OpenElement> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

struggling to bring in lifesaving supplies because of the political deadlock between the warring parties. At least one child dies every ten minutes in Yemen because of preventable diseases such as diarrhoea, malnutrition and respiratory tract infections.¹⁴

5.3.3 UNOCHA stated that: ‘An estimated 14.8 million people lack access to basic healthcare, including 8.8 million living in severely underserved areas. Medical materials are in chronically short supply, and only 45 per cent of health facilities are functioning.’¹⁵

5.3.4 Human Rights Watch noted that:

‘According to OHCHR, as of 2016, over 600 health facilities have closed due to damage caused by the conflict, shortage of critical supplies and lack of health workers.’

‘Aid workers have been kidnapped, unlawfully detained, and killed while engaged in humanitarian operations in Yemen. Humanitarian agencies are frequently denied access to areas controlled by Houthi and Saleh-aligned forces.’¹⁶

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5.4 Humanitarian access

5.4.1 In March 2016 UNHCR reported that:

‘[...] UNHCR sent thirteen trucks carrying blankets, mattresses, and other badly needed emergency relief items to Taizz governorate in the highlands of the country’s southwest. This was a breakthrough since it was the first time a UNHCR convoy made it through all the way from Aden to Taizz. “The two districts host over 7,500 displaced people. It is the first time that assistance has been delivered there using the direct route from Aden,” said UNHCR Representative in Yemen Johannes van der Klaauw.’¹⁷

5.4.2 UN General Assembly’s report on the ‘Situation of human rights in Yemen’ dated 4 August 2016 noted that:

‘OHCHR has observed a continuation of the naval blockade and restrictions on air and land travel imposed by the coalition forces throughout the period under consideration. According to humanitarian actors, the crisis has worsened as the harsh restrictions on imported vital goods have resulted in no fuel for water-pumping stations, hospitals and homes, and in a lack of medicine that has prevented the provision of adequate health care to persons with chronic ailments and those wounded by the violence. In areas

¹⁴ UNICEF, News note- Malnutrition amongst children in Yemen at an all-time high, warns UNICEF, 12 December 2016 https://www.unicef.org/media/media_93868.html [31 January 2017]

¹⁵ UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan, January 2017 <http://ochayemen.org/hrp-2017/> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

¹⁷ UNHCR ‘UNHCR reaches embattled Taizz from Aden with life-saving aid’ 23 March 2016 <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2016/3/56f2976b6/unhcr-reaches-embattled-taizz-aden-life-saving-aid.html> [date accessed 28 February 2017]

under the control of the Houthi and/or Saleh-aligned forces, restrictions have included frequent denials of the movement-of-personnel requests made by humanitarian agencies and refusal to allow aid flows.¹⁸

5.4.3 Aljazeera's Key facts about the war in Yemen dated August 2016 noted that:

'Across Yemen, aid organisations are facing major obstacles to helping Yemenis in need of food, medicine, and other essentials. The Houthi siege of parts of the city of Taiz has prevented critical medical supplies from arriving.

'Fighting in Aden has made it difficult for the World Food Programme [WFP] to deliver aid there. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has pressured aid groups to leave rebel-controlled areas of Yemen, saying that aid workers are at risk. In January 2016, a hospital operated by Doctors Without Borders was hit by a rocket, killing four people. A bombing carried out by the Saudi-led coalition injured at least six people at a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders in October 2015.¹⁹

5.4.4 The World Food Programme's Yemen Situation report dated 14 November 2016 noted that:

'Despite high levels of insecurity, in October, WFP and partners reached people in need of assistance key conflict affected governorates: Al Jawf (47,327), Hajjah (280,252) and Marib (36,786) in the north, and Taizz (375,438), Lahj (84,414), Shabwah (82,896) and Al Dhale'e (62,160) in the central and southern parts of the country. In October [2016], WFP continued to reach Sana'a, Aden, Taizz, Al Dhale'e and Lahj governorates through CVTN, with 350,304 people benefiting from food assistance.

'In September, WFP reached 2.4 million people in 18 governorates through General Food Distribution [GDP] (of its target of 3 million). Of this number, 48 percent of those reached were women and girls. In October, WFP provided food assistance to 2.9 million people in 18 governorates.

'Against critical resourcing challenges, WFP continues to deliver urgent food assistance to hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas. In October [2016], WFP reached Marib governorate for the fourth consecutive month, assisting more people than ever before (36,800 people in six districts, including Marib City). WFP also reached 1,600 people from the heavily conflicted district of Nihm in Sana'a governorate despite formidable security challenges. Taking advantage of local supply networks, WFP is assisting Taizz city through its commodity voucher (Commodity Vouchers through Traders' Network— CVTN) programme.

'In October [2016], WFP reached 3.8 million people (2.9 million through GFD and 813,216 through CVTN) in 18 governorates. WFP reached 3.2 million

¹⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Yemen, 4 August 2016 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/172/38/PDF/G1617238.pdf?OpenElement> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

¹⁹ Aljazeera Key facts about the war in Yemen, 1 August 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/key-facts-war-yemen-160607112342462.html> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

people (2.4 million through General Food Distribution [GFD] and 791,992 through CVTN) in 18 governorates in September.²⁰

5.4.5 UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan dated January 2017 noted that:

‘Parties to the conflict routinely impose restrictions on movements of people, goods and humanitarian assistance. Yemen relies on imports for more than 90 per cent of its staple food and nearly all fuel and medicine. Fluctuating Coalition import restrictions, as well as air strikes on critical infrastructure like Al Hudaydah Port, have exacerbated needs by severely hampering commercial imports. Since August 2016, the Coalition and the Government of Yemen have also banned commercial flights from using Sana’a airport. Prior to the ban, Yemenia Airlines estimates that at least one third of passengers were travelling abroad to seek medical care, often for conditions for which treatment in Yemen has become unavailable.

‘Houthi/Saleh forces and other groups have imposed restrictions on people and basic supplies from entering contested areas, including recurrent restrictions in Taizz and nearby areas. Authorities in Sana’a and other areas also at times deny or delay clearances for humanitarian activities, including movement requests for assessments or aid delivery. Restrictions on workshops, humanitarian data collection and information sharing have also been intermittently introduced and rescinded. These restrictions are at times resolved through dialogue, but the time lost represents an unacceptable burden for people who desperately need assistance. Positive developments since November 2016 indicate that these restrictions may substantially improve in the immediate coming period.’²¹

5.4.6 Human Rights Watch’s world report for 2017 noted that:

‘Parties to the conflict have continued to block or restrict critical relief supplies from reaching civilians. Houthi and allied forces have confiscated food and medical supplies from civilians entering Taizz and blocked humanitarian assistance from reaching the city, contributing to the near collapse of the health system.

‘The coalition has imposed a naval blockade on Yemen, limiting the importation of vital goods like fuel, which is urgently needed to power generators to hospitals and pump water to civilian residences. In August 2016, the coalition suspended all commercial flights to Sanaa. This is “having serious implications for patients seeking urgent medical treatment abroad,” according to the UN.’²²

5.4.7 UNOCHA’s Humanitarian dashboard published January 2017 noted that:

²⁰ World Food Programme, Yemen Situation report #24, 14 November 2016 http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp288756.pdf?_ga=1.135159411.337663804.1487583346 [date accessed 20 February 2017]

²¹ UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan, January 2017 <http://ochayemen.org/hrp-2017/> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

²² Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

'An average of 3.8 million people per month were reached with regular emergency food assistance between January to December 2016; close to 484,000 people received emergency livelihoods assistance; and almost 45,000 persons received longer-term livelihoods asset support. The main challenges in 2016 were active conflict, bureaucratic impediments, the liquidity crisis, reduced food imports and funding shortages (only 59% of the requirement was met).'²³

- 5.4.8 On 27 January 2017, the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen wrote to the President of the Security Council stating 'All parties to the conflict have obstructed the distribution of humanitarian assistance within Yemen. The methods of obstruction vary, including the denial of movement, threats to humanitarian staff and the placing of conditions that seek to influence where and how aid is distributed.'²⁴
- 5.4.9 In March 2017, in its Situation Report for Yemen, WFP warned 'Following the escalation of tension around Al Hudaydah port, there is a concern that access to the port may be restricted and commercial shipping lines may stop calling at the port. If this development was to materialise, this would have a negative impact on the delivery of humanitarian supplies in the northern part of the country.'²⁵

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5.5 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's)

5.5.1 According to United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) there are 3.11 million internally displaced persons and returnees²⁶.

5.5.2 UNOCHA's 12th report on 'The Task Force on Population Movement' published in January 2017 identified:

'[...] in connection with the ongoing conflict, 2,007,216 IDPs across 21 governorates; the majority, 50%, are displaced in Hajjah, Taizz, Amanat Al Asimah and Sana'a. The TFPM has identified 1,027,674 returnees in 19 governorates; the majority, 68%, have returned to Aden, Amanat Al Asimah and Taizz.

'The majority of IDPs were displaced within the first 6 months from the start of the conflict in March 2015. Indeed, 84% of IDPs are reported to have been displaced for more than a year, with a further 3% displaced for 10 – 12 months. The dynamics of displacement in Yemen remain fluid with constant shifts, new displacement in areas of prolonged and escalating hostilities,

²³ UNOCHA, Yemen: Humanitarian Dashboard (January - December 2016), 25 January 2017 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-dashboard-january-december-2016-enar> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

²⁴ UN Panel of Experts on Yemen Final report (S/2017/81) 27 January 2017 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2017/81 [date accessed 22 March 2017]

²⁵ WFP Situation Report Yemen, 15 March 2017 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/wfp-yemen-situation-report-27-15-march-2017> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

²⁶ United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Yemen page- January 2017 figures, <http://www.unocha.org/yemen> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

while simultaneously the emergence of return pockets continue to be observed.

‘It remains that 90% of the population who have returned from their displacement in the last 21 months have returned to 33 districts. Geographically this represents just 10% of the 333 districts in Yemen, and therefore reconfirms that clear pockets of return are developing. 40% of return have been identified in just five districts; four in Aden and one in Amanat Al Asimah accounting for two of the five identified pockets of return.’²⁷

5.5.3 UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan published in January 2017 noted that:

‘Since March 2015, more than 3 million people have been displaced within Yemen, including 2 million who remained displaced as of January 2017. About half of the current internally displaced persons (IDPs) are sheltering in Hajjah, Taizz and Sana’a. Roughly 73 per cent are living with host families, or in rented accommodation, straining already scarce resources and 20 per cent are living in collective centres or spontaneous settlements.

Displacement estimates have remained fairly stable in the last year, ranging between 2 million and 2.8 million people, and almost 90 per cent of IDPs have been displaced for more than 10 months.

‘Just over 1 million former IDPs have provisionally returned to their areas of origin, although the sustainability of these returns remains highly precarious. With periods of displacement growing longer, many IDPs have exhausted all resources and face conditions in displacement that leave them no alternative than to return. Nearly 70 per cent of returnees are in Aden, Sana’a or Taizz. Substantial numbers of returnees are living in damaged houses, are unable to afford repairs and face serious protection risks.’²⁸

5.5.4 On 21 February 2017 UN News Service stated: ‘The complex crisis in Yemen continues to deepen, with United Nations agencies reporting today that perhaps one million people who had fled for safety are returning to their homes mainly due to a lack of access to income and basic services in the areas of displacement, warning that returnees often find the situation just as bad. “It’s testament to how catastrophic the situation in Yemen has become, that those displaced by the conflict are now returning home because life in the areas to which they had fled for safety is just as abysmal as in the areas from which they fled,” said Ayman Gharaibeh, the Representative for Yemen of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in a joint press release issued with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

²⁷ UNOCHA, The Task Force on Population Movement; 12th Report- Executive Summary, January 2017 <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/task-force-on-population-movement-12th-report-january-2017.pdf> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

²⁸ UNOCHA, 2017 Humanitarian response plan, January 2017 <http://ochayemen.org/hrp-2017/> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

“These returns cannot be viewed as sustainable,” Mr. Gharaibeh added, explaining that people often return to homes that have been damaged and to areas lacking essential services, and are often forced to flee again.

‘A multi-sectoral location assessment report released today, and a periodically updated population movement tracking report published last month, show that there are currently two million internally displaced people (IDPs) across Yemen and one million IDP returnees. [...]

‘Mr. Gharaibeh noted that all of Yemen's governorates, with the exception of the island of Socotra, have been affected by conflict. “The overwhelming majority of Yemen's one million IDP returnees have returned to Aden, Amanat Al Asimah, Taizz, Lahj and Shabwah, which have been particularly impacted by hostilities and insecurity,” he explained.’²⁹

- 5.5.5 On 31 January 2017, UN News Service stated ‘[A] senior United Nations humanitarian official in Yemen voiced extreme concern today about the safety and well-being of citizens in the south-eastern part of the country, where military operations are cutting off services and causing harm to civilians. "A halt to the fighting is required to facilitate the delivery of assistance to Al Mokha and enable the free movement of civilians," said Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick, in reference to the port city on the Red Sea coast of the country. Up to 30,000 people are estimated to be trapped in Mokha, roughly one-third of the population, and in need of immediate protection and relief assistance, Mr. McGoldrick said. He noted also that scores of civilians have been injured by repeated airstrikes, shelling and sniper attacks in and around Mokha, which has also ground most services, including the main market and the water supply system. Meanwhile, in Dhubab, also a district of Taiz Governorate, tens of thousands of civilians are being forced to flee their homes to escape the fighting. Mr. McGoldrick warned that some are using mined roads, and many have already been previously displaced or lost livelihoods in the fighting.’³⁰

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6. Security situation

6.1 Actors of violence

- 6.1.1 An ITV news report, ‘Yemen's civil war- who is fighting whom?’, dated 10 October 2016 stated that:

‘Since March 2015, Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, has endured a bloody conflict between Houthi rebels and Yemen's internationally-recognised government.

²⁹ UN News Service, Yemen's brutal two-year conflict forcing displaced to return home amid persisting risks – UN, 21 February 2017 <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/yemens-brutal-two-year-conflict-forcing-displaced-return-home-amid-persisting-risks-%E2%80%93-un> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

³⁰ UN News Service, Cut off by fighting, thousands of Yemenis urgently need aid and protection – UN official says, 31 January 2017, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56076> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

'The Yemeni government, headed by President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, has the support of the US, UK and France. More importantly, a Saudi Arabian led coalition - including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Senegal and Sudan - are providing the government with military support.

'Iran - a long-standing enemy of Saudi Arabia - is said to tacitly support the Houthi rebels, although Iran denies this. Additionally, so-called Islamic State has proclaimed several provinces in Yemen vowed to wage war against the Houthis, while al Qaeda also operates there.'³¹

6.1.2 The UN children and armed conflict Yemen fact sheet stated that: 'In 2015, the United Nations verified a dramatic increase in grave violations against children committed by all parties to the conflict. Child recruitment by armed groups and militias increased five times, with over 760 cases verified.'³²

6.1.3 Critical threats 2016 Yemen crisis situation report, published on 5 October 2016, noted that:

'Yemen's civil war continues to interact with multiple conflicts. It has become part of the regional Saudi Arabia-Iran proxy war. It is an internal Yemeni war between the al Houthi-Saleh factions and the coalition that supports the internationally recognized Yemeni government. It also involves various other sub-national conflicts within Yemen. Attempts to end the war by resolving only national-level disputes have failed because both local and regional actors and tensions continue to drive the conflict and preclude any straightforward negotiated settlement. None of the various parties to the conflict accept that they are close to defeat, moreover, greatly reducing the likelihood that any of them will make significant concessions to achieve peace any time soon.'³³

6.1.4 Child Soldiers International's undated Yemen profile noted that:

'Since the escalation of conflict in Yemen in March 2015, children have been subjected to high levels of violence. The recruitment and use of children by the Houthi armed group, pro-Government militias and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has surged – the UN has reported a five-fold increase in the problem since early 2015. Increasingly, children are forcibly recruited and given jobs on the front line of the conflict (e.g. at checkpoints). Child protection agencies have struggled to safeguard children in a climate of chronic violence and worsening political insecurity.'³⁴

³¹ ITV News, Yemen's civil war: Who is fighting whom? 10 October 2016

<http://www.itv.com/news/2016-10-10/yemen-civil-war-who-is-fighting-whom/> [date accessed 23 January 2017]

³² Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Children, Not Soldiers: Yemen fact sheet, September 2016
<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries-caac/yemen/> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

³³ Critical threats, 2016 Yemen crisis situation report, 5 October 2016,
<https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2016-yemen-crisis-situation-report-october-5-2016> [date accessed 24 January 2016]

³⁴ Child Soldiers International, Yemen, undated <https://www.child-soldiers.org/yemen> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

6.1.5 Human Rights Watch's world report published in January 2017 stated that:
'Houthi forces, government and pro-government forces, and other armed groups have used child soldiers, an estimated one-third of the fighters in Yemen. The UN found in 2015 that 72 percent of 762 verified cases of child recruitment were attributable to the Houthis, with an overall five-fold increase in recruitment of children and a shift towards forced or involuntary recruitment.

'Under Yemeni law, 18 is the minimum age for military service. In 2014, the government signed a UN action plan to end the use of child soldiers. Without an effective government in place, the action plan has not been implemented.'³⁵

6.1.6 The executive summary on Yemen produced by Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment published on 14 February 2017 stated that:

'The worsening security situation in Yemen, the erosion of central authority, and the fragmentation of the Yemeni army will likely continue to give Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) unrestricted freedom of manoeuvre across southern Yemen and enable the Islamic State to increase its operational capabilities. Competition between AQAP and the Islamic State is also likely to translate into an increase in major mass-casualty attacks targeting security and coalition forces, Houthi positions, public places, mosques, hotels, and the residual Western presence in the country.'³⁶

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6.2 Nature of violence

6.2.1 The United Nations General Assembly's report on the 'Situation of human rights in Yemen' dated 4 August 2016 observed that:

'[...] a growing number of attacks by armed groups against civilians, including religious leaders, government representatives, members of the State security forces and aid workers. The perpetuation of the conflict has created security vacuums that have been increasingly exploited by armed groups. Most of the attacks documented by OHCHR were carried out by groups manifestly affiliated with Al-Qaida and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Daesh); however, some of the attacks were carried out by groups that remain unknown.'³⁷

6.2.2 The World Food Programme's Yemen Situation for November 2016 stated that:

'Following an indefinite suspension of intra-Yemeni peace talks and a three-day United Nations-brokered humanitarian ceasefire (20-24 October 2016),

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

³⁶ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Executive Summary- Yemen, 14 February 2017, subscription source [date accessed 6 March 2017]

³⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Yemen, 4 August 2016 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/172/38/PDF/G1617238.pdf?OpenElement> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

fighting has resumed in parts of Yemen. Government forces backed by Coalition airstrikes have escalated their military offensive against Houthi-held areas, with fighting being the heaviest in the central governorates of Taizz and Lahj, and the northern governorates of Marib, Hajjah and Sa'ada. Airstrikes continue to target Houthi-held governorates, with civilian casualties being reported.³⁸

6.2.3 The FCO observed in it's travel advice for UK nationals up to date as of 9 January 2017 that:

'Since 25 March 2015, Saudi Arabia has been leading coalition airstrikes against Houthi and pro-Saleh targets in Yemen in response to a request for support from President Hadi. Fighting continues across the country, which has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and damaged key infrastructure. Access to food, clean water, fuel and medical supplies is difficult throughout Yemen. There is a high risk of being caught in indiscriminate gunfire or shelling.

'The UN is facilitating peace talks between the Yemeni parties to the conflict. There have been periods of Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) in 2016 although air strikes and ground fighting have continued throughout the country to the present day. Further reports of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances raise concerns, as Houthis have carried out a wave of arrests of their opponents, and the list of abductees includes politicians, journalists, academics and activists. The political and security situation remains uncertain and volatile.

'There is a high threat from terrorism throughout Yemen and specific methods of attack are evolving and increasing in sophistication. Terrorist attacks take place on a frequent basis, and terrorists continue to threaten further attacks. There is a very high threat of kidnap and unlawful detention from militia groups, armed tribes, criminals and terrorists.³⁹

6.2.4 Human Rights Watch in their world report for 2017 noted that:

'Dozens of coalition airstrikes indiscriminately or disproportionately killed and wounded thousands of civilians in violation of the laws of war. The coalition also used internationally banned cluster munitions.

'Houthi and allied forces committed serious laws-of-war violations by laying banned antipersonnel landmines, mistreating detainees, and launching indiscriminate rockets into populated areas in Yemen and southern Saudi Arabia, killing hundreds of civilians.

'Before and since the coalition air campaign, Houthi and allied forces have used artillery rockets in indiscriminate attacks in the southern cities of Aden, Taizz, Lahj, and al-Dale'a.

³⁸ World Food Programme, Yemen Situation report #24, 14 November 2016
http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp288756.pdf?_ga=1.135159411.337663804.1487583346 [date accessed 20 February 2017]

³⁹ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: summary/current travel advice, updated 9 January 2017,
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> [date accessed 24 January 2017]

'Both AQAP and armed groups loyal to the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) claimed responsibility for numerous suicide and other bombings that killed dozens of civilians.'⁴⁰

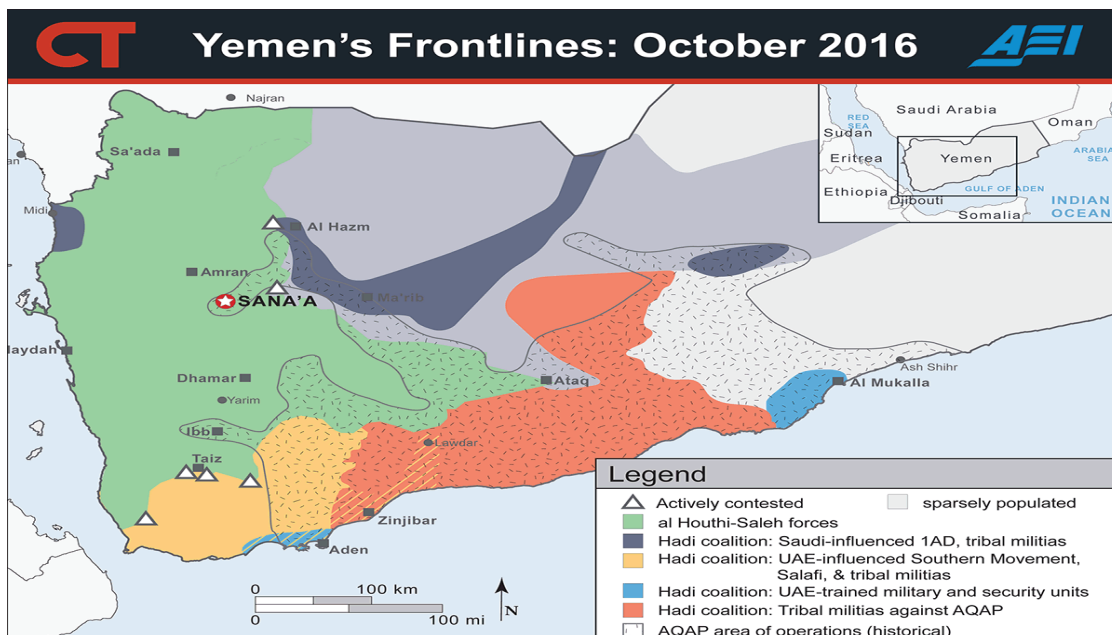
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6.3 Conflict areas

6.3.1 Critical threats report on 'Yemen frontlines October 2016' dated 6 October 2016 noted that

'The frontlines of Yemen's civil war have remained relatively fixed because neither side has the military strength to extend its influence significantly beyond the borders of its support base. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) adds complexity to the civil war. AQAP is fighting against the al Houthi-Saleh alliance and is attempting to prevent the internationally recognized government under Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi from consolidating control over southern Yemen.

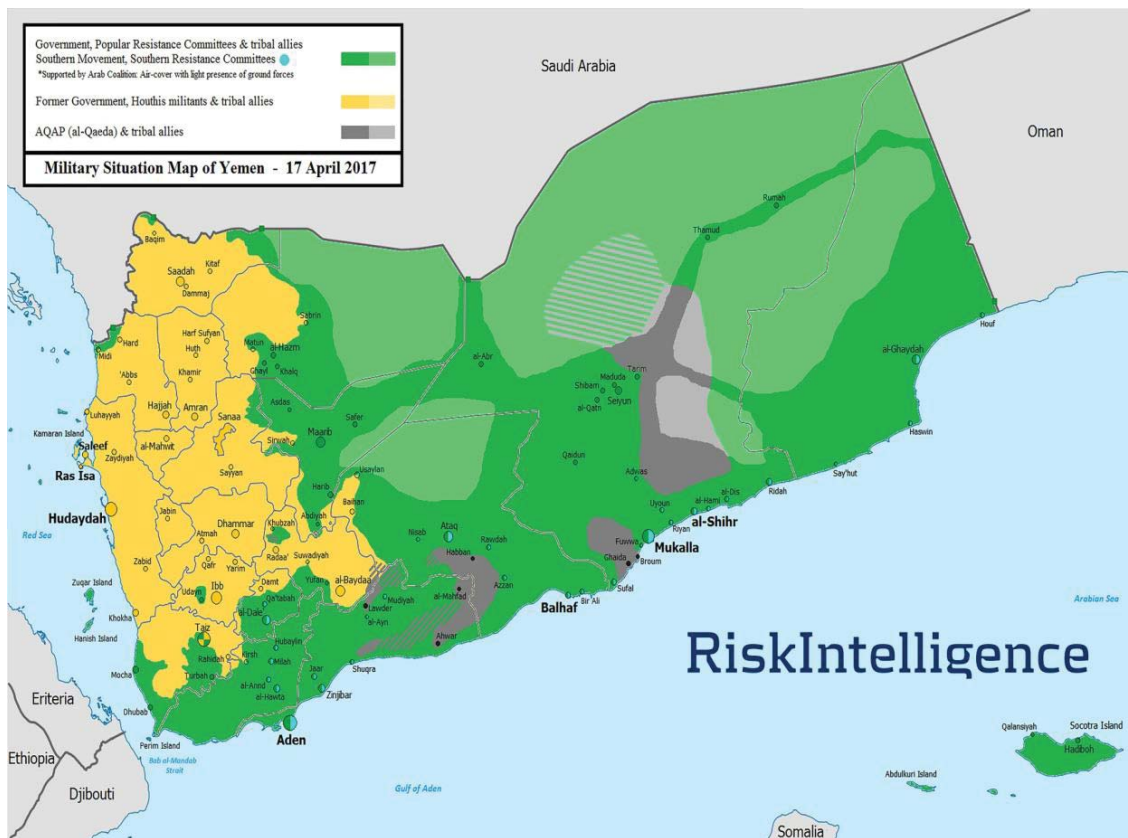
'This map of Yemen's frontlines simplifies the area of operations of major factions in Yemen's civil war. [...]Locations that are heavily contested are marked, though there is active fighting along the frontline between the al Houthi-Saleh forces and the Hadi coalition. The majority of Yemen's population is concentrated in the country's northwest and western terrain; eastern Yemen is sparsely populated and primarily desert.'⁴¹



⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

⁴¹ Critical threats, Yemen frontlines October 2016, 6 October 2016 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/yemen-frontlines-october-2016> [date accessed 25 January 2017]

6.3.2 The below map shows the most recent situation as of 17 April 2017.⁴²



6.3.3 Critical threats 2016 Yemen crisis situation report published on 5 October 2016 noted that:

‘The Yemeni state continues to fragment. The al Houthi-Saleh faction has taken steps to preserve state institutions and to create a government based in Sana’a as the internationally recognized government builds new iterations of state institutions in Aden, setting conditions for two semi-legitimate, semi-functioning governments in Yemen. It is unlikely that one side will gain a military advantage over the other given current conditions, nor is there sufficient agreement to the terms of a political solution to negotiate an end to the war. Conflict will likely thus continue, giving AQAP and other Salafi groups opportunities to recruit, organize, and train fighters for use in Yemen and other theaters.’⁴³

6.3.4 The FCO observed in it’s travel advice of 9 January 2017 which is aimed at UK nationals travelling to Yemen that:

‘Yemen remains very tense and unstable and the security situation throughout the country is dangerous [...] There’s ongoing fighting between

⁴² Twitter.com, ‘Risk Intelligence (@riskstaff)’, Tweet dated 19 April 2017 at 12:58 PM UK time, <https://twitter.com/riskstaff/status/854665500919463936> [date accessed 24 April 2017]

⁴³ Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report: October 5, 5 October 2016 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2016-yemen-crisis-situation-report-october-5-2016> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

competing factions across the country. The situation is very changeable and it's unclear in some areas which faction has control. This fighting includes armed groups like Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh's official Branch in Yemen, IS-Y.⁴⁴

6.3.5 International Crisis Group's report 'Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base' dated 2 February 2017 noted that:

'AQAP and, later and to a much lesser extent, a new outcrop of IS, emerged arguably as the biggest winners of the failed political transition and civil war that followed. AQAP adapted to the rapidly shifting political terrain, morphing into an insurgent movement capable of controlling territory and challenging state authority. Its main success derives from its demonstrated pragmatism: working within local norms, forging alliances with Sunni allies, assimilating into militias and embedding itself in a political economy of smuggling and trade that spans the various fighting factions, including the Huthi/former President Saleh alliance. It has at times controlled territory in the country's south and appears ever more embedded in the fabric of opposition to the Huthi/Saleh alliance, dominant in the north, that is fighting the internationally recognised, Saudi-backed interim government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.'⁴⁵

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6.4 Aden and southern Yemen

6.4.1 Southern Yemen includes the governorates of Aden, Ibb, Al Bayda, Al Dhaleh, Lahij, Abyan and Taiz.

6.4.2 BBC News article 'Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?' dated 14 October 2016 reported that:

'Pro-government forces - made up of soldiers loyal to President Hadi and predominantly Sunni southern tribesmen and separatists - were successful in stopping the rebels taking Aden, but only after a fierce, four-month battle that left hundreds dead.

'Having established a beachhead, coalition ground troops landed in Aden that August [2015] and helped drive the Houthis and their allies out of much of the south over the next two months. Mr Hadi and his government returned from exile at the same time and established a temporary home in Aden.

'The Houthis have also been able to maintain a siege of the southern city of Taiz and to continue firing missiles and mortars across the border with Saudi Arabia almost daily.

'Jihadist militants from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and rival affiliates of so-called Islamic State (IS) have meanwhile taken advantage of

⁴⁴ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: summary/current travel advice, updated 9 January 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> [date accessed 24 January 2017]

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base, 2 February 2017 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-base> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

the chaos by seizing territory in the south and stepping up their attacks, notably in government-controlled Aden.⁴⁶

6.4.3 Congressional Research Service report 'Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention' published on 16 November 2016 noted that:

'After 20 months of war, battle lines in Yemen have hardened. The Saudi-led coalition has retaken the port city of Aden and the lowland areas of southern Yemen (traditionally Sunni).

'As of November 2016, fighting continues throughout the country, most notably in and around the following.

- Taiz. Yemen's third largest city, Taiz (pre-war population of 300,000), continues to witness fierce fighting. Forces aligned with the coalition control most of Taiz city, but its environs are largely sealed off by Houthi-Saleh forces that surround the city on three sides. Houthi-Saleh forces only periodically permit humanitarian aid to reach city residents, and over 80% of the city's hospitals are closed. The city has been under siege since September 2015, and the humanitarian situation is dire, with reports of skyrocketing food prices and even starvation.⁴⁷

6.4.4 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) report 'Healthcare under siege in Taiz' dated 30 January 2017 stated that: 'Taiz governorate, in south-western Yemen, has seen some of the most intense and sustained fighting since the conflict escalated in March 2015. Taiz city itself is divided by frontlines, and for almost two years the city's residents have been living under constant fear and prolonged suffering.'⁴⁸

6.4.5 MSF noted in their crisis update for Yemen that: 'Taiz city is one of the worst affected areas of Yemen, with intense fighting including daily shelling in the densely populated inner city. There has been no ceasefire here since July 2015.'⁴⁹

6.4.6 International Crisis Group's report 'Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base' dated 2 February 2017 noted that:

'IS, with its more brutal tactics, has been less successful in gaining recruits or capturing territory, but war has opened space for it to operate in places that have experienced sectarian-tinged violence, such as the southern port city of Aden. There, the group has turned its sights on the Hadi government and local security personnel through assassinations and bombings that have, indirectly, benefited the Huthi/Saleh front by weakening its common

⁴⁶ BBC News, Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom? 14 October 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

⁴⁷ Congressional Research Service, Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention, 16 November 2016
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf> [date accessed 6 February 2017]

⁴⁸ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Yemen: Healthcare under siege in Taiz, 30 January 2017
<http://www.msf.org/en/article/yemen-healthcare-under-siege-taiz> [date accessed 6 February 2017]

⁴⁹ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Yemen: Crisis update - January 2017, 31 January 2017
<http://www.msf.org/en/article/yemen-crisis-update-january-2017> [date accessed 6 February 2017]

enemies and repeatedly underscoring the lack of security in Aden, the government's temporary capital.⁵⁰

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6.5 Central and northern Yemen

6.5.1 Critical threats report on 'Yemen frontlines October 2016' dated 6 October 2016 noted that:

'The al Houthi-Saleh alliance in northern Yemen continues to control historical strongholds for both the al Houthi movement and former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh.'⁵¹

6.5.2 The BBC report that: '[...] despite the air campaign and naval blockade continuing unabated, pro-government forces have been unable to dislodge the rebels from their northern strongholds, including Sanaa and its surrounding province.'⁵²

6.5.3 A Jamestown Foundation report of November 2016 noted: 'The Houthis retain control of northwest Yemen, and their alliance with Yemen's ancien régime led by former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh has deepened. The Houthis enjoy broader support than ever before. The war has helped the Houthis transform themselves from a parochial rebel movement to a national movement that routinely casts itself as a "defender of the nation" in the face of Saudi aggression.'⁵³

6.5.4 Congressional research service report of November 2016 noted that:

'As of November 2016, fighting continues throughout the country, most notably in and around the following.

- Saudi-Yemeni Border. In the far north along the Yemeni-Saudi border, Houthi-Saleh forces continue to target the kingdom. In the Saudi provinces of Najran and Jizan, Houthi-Saleh forces have launched offensives into Saudi territory and Scud and other ballistic missiles into Saudi territory and at coalition forces inside Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates each have multiple U.S.-supplied Patriot missile batteries protecting their respective forces.
- Marib Province. Bordering the capital province of Sana'a to the east, Marib governorate and city are strategically important areas that the Saudi-led coalition seeks to control. Marib province is where the country's

⁵⁰ International Crisis Group, Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base, 2 February 2017 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/174-yemen-s-al-qaeda-expanding-base> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

⁵¹ Critical threats, Yemen frontlines October 2016, 6 October 2016 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/yemen-frontlines-october-2016> [date accessed 25 January 2017]

⁵² BBC News, Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom? 14 October 2016 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

⁵³ Jamestown Foundation, An Unwinnable War: The Houthis, Saudi Arabia and the Future of Yemen, 11 November 2016, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 14 Issue: 22, : <https://jamestown.org/program/unwinnable-war-houthis-saudi-arabia-future-yemen/> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

main refinery is located, along with one of its two main oil pipelines. Houthi-Saleh forces have been attacking the Marib tribes and coalition forces. In late July 2016, two Saudi pilots were killed in Marib when their Apache helicopter crashed. The helicopter crash marked the first time the Saudi military acknowledged it had lost any aircraft in the war. Saudi Arabia maintains an air base north of Marib city.⁵⁴

6.5.5 Critical Threats Crisis situation report dated 19 January 2017 noted that:

‘Hadi government forces have renewed efforts to advance the frontline in northern Yemen. Hadi government forces and allied militias from southern Yemen established a second foothold in north-western Sa’ada governorate in early December [2016], two months after securing al Buqa’ city in north-eastern Sa’ada. They then seized the al Houthi-Saleh–held 101st brigade headquarters in north-eastern Sa’ada in early January. Sa’ada governorate is an al Houthi stronghold and borders Saudi Arabia. Hadi-aligned forces also reinvigorated an offensive in north-western Shabwah governorate in late December, seizing territory in Usaylan and Bayhan districts. Al Houthi-Saleh forces launched a counterattack, seizing some of the lost territory. Control over north-western Shabwah would secure the Hadi government’s control over eastern Yemen.’⁵⁵

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6.6 Level of violence and number of casualties

6.6.1 The website Slate noted in 18 October 2016 that: ‘The war in Yemen has left at least 10,000 dead, including almost 4,000 civilians, according to the United Nations, and has displaced 3.2 million Yemenis, out of a population of 27 million. It has decimated the economy of what was already the poorest country in the Arab world and sparked a deadly famine. Yemen’s infrastructure is in ruins.’⁵⁶

6.6.2 The World Food Programme’s Yemen Situation for November 2016 stated that: ‘The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and other senior UN humanitarian officials, condemned airstrikes on a community hall in Sana’a on 08 October [2016] which killed at least 140 civilians. The Secretary General also condemned airstrikes that caused civilian deaths in Hudaydah on 21 September and in Sa’ada on 13 August.’⁵⁷

6.6.3 BBC News reporting in January 2017 that:

⁵⁴ Congressional Research Service, Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention, 16 November 2016 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf> [date accessed 6 February 2017]

⁵⁵ Critical Threats, 2017 Yemen Crisis Situation Report: January 19, 19 January 2017 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2017-yemen-crisis-situation-report-january-19> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

⁵⁶ Slate, Yemen Isn’t Just a Proxy War Between Saudi Arabia and Iran, 18 October 2016 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2016/10/the_yemen_conflict_is_not_just_a_proxy_war.html [date accessed 31 January 2017]

⁵⁷ World Food Programme, Yemen Situation report #24, 14 November 2016 http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp288756.pdf?_ga=1.135159411.337663804.1487583346 [date accessed 20 February 2017]

‘At least 10,000 people have been killed in the war in Yemen between Houthi rebels and the Saudi-led coalition supporting the government, the UN says. The conflict between the Houthis and the government escalated in March 2015. The coalition intervened militarily in an attempt to restore the internationally-recognised administration after Mr Hadi was forced to flee the country. Since then, "the estimates are that over 10,000 people have been killed in this conflict and almost 40,000 people injured", UN humanitarian co-ordinator for Yemen Jamie McGoldrick told reporters in the capital Sanaa on Monday. He did not provide a breakdown between civilians and combatants. However, a UN report said community-level human rights monitors had reported 11,332 civilian casualties, including 4,125 killed, by the end of October 2016.’⁵⁸

6.6.4 Human Rights Watch in their world report for 2017 noted that:

‘Since taking control of the capital, Sanaa, in September 2014, the Houthis and their allies have carried out a campaign of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances against perceived opponents. They have launched artillery rockets in indiscriminate attacks into southern Saudi Arabia and in Yemen, killing 475 civilians and wounding 1,121 between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016, according to the UN. Houthi and allied forces have also laid banned anti-personnel landmines that have killed and wounded dozens of civilians.’

6.6.5 Since March 2015, Human Rights Watch has documented seven indiscriminate attacks by Houthi and allied forces in Aden and Taizz that killed 139 people, including at least 8 children.’⁵⁹

6.6.6 Amnesty International’s report on 2016 published on 22 February 2017 stated: “According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 4,125 civilians, including more than 1,200 children, had been killed and more than 7,000 civilians wounded since the conflict began in March 2015.”⁶⁰

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6.7 Profile of casualties and targets

6.7.1 In September 2016 The Guardian report on data showing the outcome of Saudi air raids the report stated that:

‘More than one-third of all Saudi-led air raids on Yemen have hit civilian sites, such as school buildings, hospitals, markets, mosques and economic infrastructure, according to the most comprehensive survey of the conflict.

‘The independent and non-partisan survey, based on open-source data, including research on the ground, records more than 8,600 air attacks

⁵⁸ BBC News, Yemen conflict: At least 10,000 killed, says UN, 17 January 2017 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-38646066> [date accessed 1 February 2017]

⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 31 January 2017]

⁶⁰ Amnesty International: Report 2016/17 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Yemen, 22 February 2017 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/report-yemen> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

between March 2015, when the Saudi-led campaign began, and the end of August this year [2016]. Of these, 3,577 were listed as having hit military sites and 3,158 struck non-military sites.

‘Where it could not be established whether a location attacked was civilian or military, the strikes were classified as unknown, of which there are 1,882 incidents.

‘One of the most problematic findings of the survey for Saudi Arabia is the number of reported repeat attacks. While some attacks on civilian sites can be explained away as mistakes or being the location of military camps in densely populated areas such as Sana’a, repeated strikes on school buildings and hospitals will add to demands for an independent investigation.

‘One school building in Dhubab, Taiz governorate, has been hit nine times, according to the data. A market in Sirwah, Marib governorate, has been struck 24 times.’

‘According to the [Yemen Data] project, the Saudi-led coalition hit more non-military sites than military in five of the past 18 months. In October 2015, the figures were 291, compared with 208; in November, 126 against 34; December, 137 compared with 62; February 2016, 292 to 139, and March, 122 compared with 80. Despite a ceasefire announced in April, air raids have continued. Over the course of the war, the survey lists 942 attacks on residential areas, 114 on markets, 34 on mosques, 147 on school buildings, 26 on universities and 378 on transport.’⁶¹

6.7.2 Human Rights Watch, World Report for 2017 published on 12 January 2017 documented:

‘58 apparently unlawful coalition airstrikes that killed at least 192 children, and multiple airstrikes that struck or damaged schools. The Houthis have also endangered schools and used child soldiers. The coalition was responsible for 60 percent of the 785 children killed and 1,168 children wounded, and nearly half of the 101 attacks on schools and hospitals, according to the report.

‘[The] 58 apparently unlawful coalition airstrikes documented by HRW since the start of the campaign have reportedly killed nearly 800 civilians and hit homes, markets, hospitals, schools, civilian businesses, and mosques. Some attacks may amount to war crimes. These include airstrikes on a crowded market in northern Yemen on March 15 that killed 97 civilians, including 25 children, and another on a crowded funeral in Sanaa on October that killed over 100 civilians and wounded hundreds more. Repeated coalition airstrikes on factories and other civilian economic structures raise serious concerns that the coalition deliberately sought to inflict damage to Yemen’s limited production capacity.[...]

⁶¹ The Guardian, One in three Saudi air raids on Yemen hit civilian sites, data shows, 16 September 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/16/third-of-saudi-airstrikes-on-yemen-have-hit-civilian-sites-data-shows>

Human Rights Watch has documented the coalition using internationally banned cluster munitions in at least 16 attacks that targeted populated areas, killing and wounding dozens. Human Rights Watch has identified six types of air-dropped and ground-launched cluster munitions in multiple locations in Yemen, including those produced in the US and Brazil. Amnesty International has further documented the use of UK-made cluster munitions.

Houthi and allied forces laid numerous landmines, including banned antipersonnel mines, in Yemen's southern and eastern governorates of Aden, Abyan, Marib, Lahj, and Taizz since the beginning of the current conflict. Landmines have killed and wounded dozens of civilians, including children.⁶²

- 6.7.3 In its report on 2016 Amnesty International stated that "Huthi and allied forces, including army units loyal to former President Saleh, repeatedly carried out violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. They endangered civilians in areas they controlled by launching attacks from the vicinity of schools, hospitals and homes, exposing residents to attacks by pro-government forces, including aerial bombing by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition. They also indiscriminately fired explosive munitions that affect a wide area, including mortars and artillery shells, into residential areas controlled or contested by opposing forces, particularly in Ta'iz city, killing and injuring civilians. By November, Huthi and allied forces had reportedly carried out at least 45 unlawful attacks in Ta'iz, killing and injuring scores of civilians. One attack on 4 October killed 10 civilians, including six children, and injured 17 others in a street near the Bir Basha market, the UN reported. The Huthis and their allies also continued to lay internationally banned anti-personnel landmines that caused civilian casualties, and to recruit and deploy child soldiers. In June, the UN Secretary-General reported that the Huthis were responsible for 72% of 762 verified cases of recruitment of child soldiers during the conflict."⁶³

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7. Impact on vulnerable groups

7.1 Impact on daily life

- 7.1.1 The UN's children and armed conflict Yemen factsheet noted that: 'Attacks on schools and hospitals doubled, bringing the total number to over 100. The majority of attacks caused the partial or total destruction of schools and health facilities, killing and maiming doctors and teachers, and depriving thousands of children of their fundamental rights to education and health.'⁶⁴

⁶² Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

⁶³ Amnesty International: Report 2016/17 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Yemen, 22 February 2017 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/report-yemen> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

⁶⁴ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Children, Not Soldiers: Yemen fact sheet, September 2016

- 7.1.2 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) report on healthcare under siege noted that:

‘[...] people's living conditions have deteriorated and the price of essentials, including food and water, has soared. A crippled health system, combined with increasingly harsh living conditions, has prompted a decline in people's health, with particularly acute consequences for vulnerable groups with low immunity such as pregnant women, new-born babies and young children.’

‘Many families have been forced to flee their homes to escape the fighting, and now live in makeshift settlements in tents made from plastic sheeting, without adequate sanitation and without such essentials as mattresses, blankets or cooking equipment. Others are sheltering in overcrowded apartments or in empty school buildings. For most people, healthcare is prohibitively expensive, and people turn to it only as a last resort, when they are very sick and when it may already be too late.’⁶⁵

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7.2 Children

- 7.2.1 The Safeguarding health in conflict coalition report ‘No protection, no respect, health workers and health facilities under attack 2015 and early 2016’ dated 23 May 2016 noted that:

‘In addition to deaths directly related to the fighting, according to UNICEF, the lack of health care and immunizations has resulted in the preventable deaths of nearly 10,000 children under the age of five. UNICEF also estimates that 2.5 million children are now at high risk of diarrheal diseases, 1.3 million are at risk of acute respiratory tract infections, 2.6 million at risk of measles, and more than 320,000 are at risk of severe acute malnutrition.’⁶⁶

- 7.2.2 The UN Children and Armed Conflict ‘Yemen fact sheet’ noted that: ‘According to UN verified figures, there were close to 2,000 child casualties in 2015, a six-fold increase compared to the previous year. The majority of child casualties were caused by airstrikes and ground fighting in civilian areas.’⁶⁷

- 7.2.3 Al Monitor’s report ‘Yemen's education system latest victim of ongoing war’ dated 7 October 2016 stated that:

‘Taher al-Shalafi, the director of the Studies and Educational Media Centre (SEMC) in Sanaa, told Al-Monitor that more than 2,000 schools out of the 16,000 schools in Yemen are no longer suitable to receive students for

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries-caac/yemen/> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

⁶⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Yemen- healthcare under siege, 30 January 2017,

<https://msf.exposure.co/yemen> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁶⁶ Safeguarding health in conflict coalition, No protection, no respect, health workers and health facilities under attack 2015 and early 2016, 23 May 2016

<https://www.safeguardinghealth.org/sites/shcc/files/SHCC2016final.pdf> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁶⁷ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Children, Not Soldiers: Yemen fact sheet, September 2016

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries-caac/yemen/> [date accessed 21 February 2017]

several reasons. The main reason being the destruction of school buildings following airstrikes by the Saudi-led Arab coalition, and the internal war between Houthi militants who are backed by military forces affiliated with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh on one hand, and armed groups backed by a popular resistance force affiliated with President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Yemen's internationally recognized president, on the other.

"Based on a SEMC field report, 1.3 million out of 6 million Yemeni students have been prevented from pursuing their education during the 2015-16 academic year, representing 22% of the total number of students in Yemen — one out of five Yemeni students — while only 40% of schoolteachers were able to perform their jobs."

'Muammar al-Fahd, one of the teachers at al-Shahid al-Hinduana school in Sanaa, told Al-Monitor, "Education has hit rock bottom during the last two years and slipped to indescribable levels. This is the worst phase in the history of modern Yemen."

'Education was mostly affected in the governorates of Taiz and Hajjah, as education was completely halted in the towns of Abes and Hard near the border with Saudi Arabia. The source said, "The coalition aircraft bombed all public and private schools and education there has stopped completely since last year." In this regard, [school headteacher] Shalafi said, "The armed conflict in Taiz caused the closure of 468 schools out of a total number of 1,642 schools, depriving 250,000 students from education, out of a total of 800,000 students."

'During the war, 1.8 million students were unable to go to school either because their schools were destroyed or occupied by internally displaced persons or because the students themselves became displaced or were recruited into the different warring militias. About 60,000 students had to leave private schools for public ones, indicating that the war has affected all segments of Yemeni society.

'Yemeni universities have been open only intermittently during the conflict. Many teachers were imprisoned or dismissed from work by the Houthi rebel group, had to leave their jobs or the country, or were striking to protest not being paid.'⁶⁸

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7.3 The elderly

7.3.1 The Middle East Eye report 'No country for old men: Yemen's war leaves elderly destitute' dated 6 March 2016 stated that:

'A quarter of a million elderly struggle to survive on charity alone through Yemen's war, and the country's few nursing homes are targets for attack. [...] The government knows all too well of the desperate conditions the elderly face during a time of war, but it does nothing to help. There are no

⁶⁸ Al Monitor, Is Yemen falling into an abyss?, 28 November 2016 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2016/11/yemen-war-recovery-social-economy-problems.html> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

state homes, and there is no budget for the elderly, a Ministry of Social Affairs source told MEE. "In the whole country, there are only four homes belonging to Mother Teresa, which provide for 200 people, while those in need of help are more than 250,000 in the whole country," the source said.

'Adding to the problem is the fact that the Mother Teresa organisation is a Christian charity operating in a Muslim country. Conversion is a crime punishable by death in Yemen, and even association risks suspicion and attack by groups such as the Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda. As shown in Aden, an attack for which the UN has indeed pointed the finger at IS, such homes still cannot guarantee a safe or comfortable life for Yemen's elderly.'⁶⁹

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7.4 Disabled people

7.4.1 Human Rights Watch's 'Dispatches: With Disabilities in Yemen, Left in the Rubble' dated 11 May 2015 stated that:

'According to the United Nations human rights office, an estimated three million people with disabilities live in Yemen. Many of them are at particular risk because they can't flee to safety or access even basic services. Because of the limited fuel, lack of electricity and rubble-covered streets, people with disabilities – particularly those in wheelchairs – cannot readily move about and have become virtually imprisoned in their homes.

'More than 300 organizations that provided specialized services for people with disabilities have had to close, many with their facilities in shambles. In many hospitals across Yemen that remain functioning, people with pre-existing disabilities are reportedly being denied access to medicines they require because of the urgent need to treat people injured in the conflict.

'Schools and hostels for children with disabilities, including a school and girls' hostel run by al-Aman Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Blind, were among buildings destroyed in coalition airstrikes on April 20 [2015].'⁷⁰

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7.5 Hospitals, health services and aid workers

7.5.1 Out of 3507 health care facilities, 1579 are fully functional, 1343 are partially functional and 504 are non functional⁷¹.

7.5.2 In a 28 November 2016 report, Al Monitor stated: 'Yemen is unable to provide health care for a large share of the population. More than half of its health facilities are out of service or only partially functioning, leaving

⁶⁹ Middle East Eye, No country for old men: Yemen's war leaves elderly destitute, 6 March 2016 <http://www.middleeasteye.net/Yemen-old-peoples-home> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch, Dispatches: With Disabilities in Yemen, Left in the Rubble, 11 May 2015 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/11/dispatches-disabilities-yemen-left-rubble> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁷¹ WHO, Health system in Yemen info graphic, 11 November 2017 <http://www.who.int/hac/crises/yem/sitreps/yemen-herams-infographic-november2016.pdf?ua=1> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

Yemenis to fall prey to war injuries and diseases that have been all but forgotten in the developed world, such as dengue fever and cholera. The World Health Organization said the number of cholera cases in Yemen doubled in less than two weeks, exceeding 4,000 by mid-November [2016]. In addition, the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates more than 6,000 Yemenis have lost one or more limbs during this war, adding to the number of disabled people in Yemen, which was estimated at 2 million in 2014.⁷²

7.5.3 The 23 May 2016 Safeguarding health in conflict coalition report noted ‘Aid workers transporting medical supplies are at constant risk of kidnapping. In March 2015, Houthi fighters abducted three volunteers for Inqath, an aid group that provides medical supplies to hospitals in Aden, as they took boxes of medicine by taxi to al-Jumhuri Hospital, releasing them a week later. The next month, three ambulances operated by the Ministry of Public Health and Population were taken by armed forces and used for nonmedical purposes. In May [2015], aid workers in a convoy of five vehicles delivering medical supplies to a medical compound in the Mualla district of Aden were stopped at a checkpoint and held until two of their families each paid US\$1,000.’⁷³

7.5.4 Amnesty International reported in November 2016 that: ‘Anti-Huthi forces in Yemen’s southern city of Ta’iz are leading a campaign of harassment and intimidation against hospital staff and are endangering civilians by stationing fighters and military positions near medical facilities ... ‘During a visit to Ta’iz earlier this month, the organization’s researchers interviewed 15 doctors, and other hospital staff, who described how members of anti-Huthi armed forces regularly harassed, detained or even threatened to kill them over the past six months. [...]In at least three cases hospitals were shut down because of threats against staff. In the latest incident, on Monday 21 November, one faction of anti-Huthi forces raided and shut down al-Thawra hospital, the biggest public hospital in Ta’iz, apparently in retaliation for hospital staff providing emergency medical treatment to three injured Huthi fighters. According to eyewitnesses three armed men stormed an office at the hospital and threatened to kill medical staff if it was not shut down immediately. They also tried to drag the two surviving Huthi fighters – one of whom is a minor- out of the hospital’s intensive care and recovery units, but were prevented by medical staff. [...]

⁷² Al Monitor, Is Yemen falling into an abyss?, 28 November 2016 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2016/11/yemen-war-recovery-social-economy-problems.html> [date accessed 21 March 2017]

⁷³ Safeguarding health in conflict coalition, No protection, no respect, health workers and health facilities under attack 2015 and early 2016, 23 May 2016 <https://www.safeguardinghealth.org/sites/shcc/files/SHCC2016final.pdf> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

Several of the doctors told Amnesty International that the lawlessness that has engulfed Ta'iz has created a security vacuum exposing them to greater risks from anti-Huthi forces who are trying to exert control at the hospitals. One administrative staff member described the anti-Huthi forces as “the de facto authority”. He said that they often came to the hospital asking for fighters with war wounds to be treated. Doctors told Amnesty International that if anti-Huthi fighters were turned away due to lack of capacity at the hospital in some cases they turned violent or abusive. In other cases, medical staff said that doctors were forced to carry out their work at gunpoint. Staff at al-Thawra hospital told Amnesty International that fighters set up defensive positions, including by parking tanks around the hospital compound ignoring pleas by staff and local authorities not to do so. This has put hospital buildings, staff and patients at serious risk amid retaliatory fire from Huthi forces.”⁷⁴

- 7.5.5 The Arab weekly report ‘Humanitarian workers in Yemen in the crossfire’ dated 5 February 2016 noted that:

[...] deliberate attacks targeting international actors have forced many to evacuate their expatriate staff, as others struggle to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to beleaguered populations in Yemen while facing larger challenges involving the protection of their own aid workers, especially national staff members.

“At least 90 international aid workers have left Yemen since the onset of the crisis. We now ask the international organisations to monitor closely the movement of their staff and restrict that movement within their premises,” said Ali Shohra from the Ministry of Planning, which is in charge of coordinating the work of international organisations operating in Yemen. “Security threats against aid workers remain imminent and real,” Shohra added.⁷⁵

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7.6 Employment

- 7.6.1 In November 2016 Al Monitor reported: ‘Yemen's small labor force, estimated at 4.2 million people in 2013-2014, must sustain the country's 21 million people and carry the burden of reconstruction with a plan to integrate more and more people into the labor force by offering more jobs. This remains a challenge with the country's continuing brain drain and the low level of education among its labor force. About 70% of Yemen's workers have nothing more than a primary education.’⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Amnesty International, Yemen: Hospitals and medical workers under attack by anti-Huthi forces in Ta'iz, 23 November 2016 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/11/yemen-hospitals-and-medical-workers-under-attack-by-anti-huthi-forces-in-taiz/> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁷⁵ The Arab weekly, Humanitarian workers in Yemen in the crossfire, 5 February 2016 <http://www.thearabweekly.com/Opinion/3698/Humanitarian-workers-in-Yemen-in-the-crossfire> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁷⁶ Al Monitor, Is Yemen falling into an abyss?, 28 November 2016 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2016/11/yemen-war-recovery-social-economy->

- 7.6.2 In December 2016 the Independent noted that: ‘The air strikes have targeted nearly every industry, erasing countless jobs and dreams. An air, sea and land blockade by neighbouring Saudi Arabia has made fuel and food more scarce, causing prices to skyrocket in a nation that imports 90 per cent of its food and medicine. A banking crisis has added to the turmoil, leaving government workers unpaid and harming businesses. [...] “The air strikes, de facto blockade and collapse of the central bank have together precipitated the near-total collapse of Yemen's economy,” said Scott Paul, a senior humanitarian policy adviser for the aid agency Oxfam America. “These steps show that all of the main parties are willing to wage economic warfare and risk tremendous suffering by ordinary people in order to advance their positions.”’⁷⁷
- 7.6.3 Critical threats noted in their Yemen situation report of 8 February 2017 that: ‘Insufficient governance threatens the Hadi government’s legitimacy. The Hadi government has yet to pay the majority of the salaries in southern Yemen, sparking frequent anti-government protests.’⁷⁸

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8. Freedom of movement

- 8.1.1 The US State Department’s Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016 published on 3 March 2017:

‘The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. Prior to 2014 the transitional government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. The Houthi takeover and the ensuing conflict, however, made it difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach many areas of the country due to security concerns. The Hadi-led government did not and could not enforce the law, even in government-controlled areas, due to capacity and governance issues.

‘According to UNHCR, the country’s laws and policies were consistent with international standards, but the authorities’ capacity to protect and assist persons in need was limited. No authority was able to provide services in some parts of the country.

‘Rebel forces, resistance forces, elements of the army and security forces, and tribesmen maintained checkpoints on major roads. In many regions, especially in areas outside effective central security control, armed

[problems.html](#) [date accessed 21 March 2017]

⁷⁷ The Independent, The latest casualty of Yemen's civil war? The economy, 27 December 2016 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/yemen-civil-war-saudi-arabia-air-strikes-a7497531.html> [date accessed 22 February 2017]

⁷⁸ Critical threats, Yemen situation report, 8 February 2017 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/yemen-situation-report/2017-yemen-crisis-situation-report-february-8-2017> [date accessed 15 February 2017]

tribesmen frequently restricted freedom of movement, operating their own checkpoints, sometimes with military or other security officials, and often subjected travellers to physical harassment, extortion, theft, or short-term kidnappings for ransom. Damage to roads, bridges, and other infrastructure from the conflict also hindered the delivery of humanitarian aid and commercial shipments.

‘Social discrimination severely restricted women’s freedom of movement. Women in general did not enjoy full freedom of movement, although restrictions varied by location. Some observers reported increased restrictions on women in conservative locations, such as Sa’ada. Oxfam reported that men at checkpoints increasingly insisted on adherence to the “mahram” system, the cultural obligation of women to be accompanied by male relatives in public, in areas controlled by radical Islamic groups, such as AQAP. The report also noted that female respondents ranked the key factor limiting women’s freedom of movement as the lack of cultural acceptance, followed by lack of security.

‘Authorities required travel permits for all non-Yemeni nationals leaving Sana’a. The OHCHR reported that local authorities evicted at least 155 persons from Aden following a “carry your identification” campaign that witnesses claimed was used to displace northerners who were later captured and forcibly transported out of Aden.’⁷⁹

8.1.2 Freedom House’s world report for 2016 noted that: ‘Freedom of movement, property rights, and business activity are impaired by the security situation and corruption. [...]Women continue to face discrimination in many aspects of life. A woman must obtain permission from her husband or father to receive a passport and travel abroad.’⁸⁰

8.1.3 On 9 January 2017, the FCO’s travel advice for UK nationals observed:

‘The situation remains very tense and changeable. Clashes and airstrikes have caused temporary suspension or closure of airports across the country.

‘Yemeni air space is currently controlled by Saudi-led coalition forces. The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen have declared that starting from 15 August 2016, Sana’a International Airport will be opened for United Nations and other international humanitarian organisations’ flights. Humanitarian organisations must send a notice to the coalition in advance of each flight, and permission will be issued based on the status of military operations. Due to an outbreak of cholera, Yemeni passengers flying to Amman through UN Humanitarian Air Service flights or through commercial flights have been advised to provide a “disease-free certificate” certified by accredited sources before travel to Jordan.

⁷⁹ US State Department, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016 - Yemen, 3 March 2017 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265528> [date accessed 7 March 2017]

⁸⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2016- Yemen, 14 July 2016 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/yemen> [date accessed 20 February 2017]

'Yemenia Airways flights from Sana'a airport are suspended until further notice. Yemenia Airways occasionally operate flights from Aden airport which reopened in May 2016, however Yemenia's schedule is subject to last minute alterations or cancellation.

'There are no direct cargo or passenger flights between Yemen and the EU. Previous aviation incidents have included a failed attempt to bomb an aircraft destined for the USA, and two explosive devices identified in air cargo originating from Yemen.'⁸¹

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⁸¹ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: safety and security, updated 9 January 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> [date accessed 24 January 2017]

Version control and contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about this note and your line manager, senior caseworker or technical specialist cannot help you, or you think that this note has factual errors then [email the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

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- valid from **14 June 2017**

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Updates to the country information and a change to the layout of the COI

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