



مركز للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Center for Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Pulling the Trigger **Houthi Militia Violations in Yemen** **after Eight Years of Conflict**

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Introduction

Eight years have passed since the armed conflict in Yemen, which has turned the once-called Happy Yemen into the worst humanitarian crisis worldwide, where about 17.3 million suffer from food insecurity, 21.6 million need assistance, and about 20.3 million lack basic health services according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)¹. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has estimated that 1.3 million people will die, in addition to the death of a child every five minutes, if war in Yemen continues until 2030.

Not respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in areas under the control of the Houthi militia may have further exacerbated the situation of the population in Yemen. 70% of the population lives in Yemen in areas under the control of the Houthi authorities where the militia rules by force of arms, while only 30% of the population lives in areas governed by the Presidential Leadership Council.

The Houthi militia has intentionally followed a strategy of intimidation of civilians under its control, and one of the repercussions of this strategy has been the loss of thousands of civilians' lives and the injury of others. Civilian infrastructure has also been affected by the indiscriminate shelling of the Houthi militia and the forced deportation or displacement of hundreds of families to IDP camps that lack basic services or any form of life. Impunity and failure to open transparent investigations into all violations of humanitarian and international human rights law are still prevalent in northern Yemen, making these violations a frequent pattern for the militants of the Houthi militia, as the bloodshed is still going on. The Houthi militia's abandonment of the truce on October 2, 2022, and their desire not to extend it, may lead to more human rights violations and exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in northern Yemen.

The illegal flow of arms in Yemen has also affected the continuation of the conflict, which has exacerbated human rights violations against civilians. The transfer of small arms, light weapons, ammunition, and Ground Combat Vehicle to the Houthi militia is a major factor in the continuation of its militants committing grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. In September 2020, the spokesman for the Iranian armed forces, Abu al-Fadl Shukarji, boasted of the Houthis' weapons manufacturing capabilities, saying that Iran had "transferred expertise and knowledge" to them².

Iran's supply of advanced weapons and advisors to the Houthi militia led to the formation of the military arsenal of the Houthi militia. Besides its military units from the Yemeni army's arsenal, Iran has assigned strategic missile systems and drones to target sites deep in the lands of its neighbors, in addition to boats loaded with drones, Iranian support has extended the conflict to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula and represented direct threats to some countries

¹ على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3IXQGbl> الاستجابة الإنسانية لصندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان في اليمن لعام 2023، ص 8،

² Yemen's Houthis and the Expansion of Iran's Axis of Resistance, <https://bit.ly/3mwiTOW>

and individuals stationed in the Gulf. Iranian weapons in the Houthi militia's arsenal today include anti-aircraft systems, ballistic missiles, short and long-range drones, Land-based explosive devices and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In this in-depth study, Maat reviews the human rights situation in northern Yemen, which is under the control of the Houthi militia, designated by Security Council Resolution No. 2426 of 2022 as a terrorist group. This study does not only review the obligations of the Houthi militia under international humanitarian law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1939 and Additional Protocol II to the Fourth Geneva Conventions; but also review the militia's commitment under international human rights law and international treaties and conventions was recognized by the Houthi Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its letters with Yemen's experts as being applicable to it and committed to implementing it in areas under its control. In its written correspondence to the Group of Experts on Yemen, the Houthi militia acknowledged human rights obligations and stated that its forces respect their international obligations to protect civilians in accordance with by international humanitarian and human rights law. The Houthi militia also notified that human rights treaties ratified by the Yemeni Government apply to their administration³. We have reviewed these promises made by the militia at various times and it pledged to United Nations bodies and its agencies.

In this study, Maat focuses on violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the targeting of civilians in light of the indiscriminate attacks on them, infrastructure, and civilian objects, the use of internationally prohibited weapons and explosive weapons against civilians by the Houthi militia. In addition to the use of torture as a tool in the conflict in northern Yemen. The second section of the study focuses on violations of international human rights law, especially summary and arbitrary executions, violations of freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press, denial of education, the right to work, and the right to health. Finally, the third section of this study focuses on violations against the most vulnerable groups in Yemen such as women, children, minorities, and migrants. Perhaps the main purpose of this study is to illustrate the terrible damage inflicted on civilians after eight years of conflict.

^{3 3} Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014, Para 82, <https://bit.ly/3Fqg2xV>

Methodology

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights derived the facts, information and evidence relied upon in the study from the testimonies of some human rights defenders and journalists who authorized Maat to adopt their cases before international human rights mechanisms. Maat also reviewed the monthly forecasts issued by the Security Council regarding the State of Yemen and reports Security Council Panel of Experts on Yemen. The report also relied on some facts documented by the Houthi leaders themselves. The basis of the study can be summarized as follows:

- ☞ Daily documentation of human rights violations in areas under Houthi control in northern Yemen.
- ☞ Statistics issued by the National Commission to Investigate Human Rights Allegations in Yemen.
- ☞ Testimonies obtained by Maat from human rights defenders and families of victims in Yemen.
- ☞ Review of documents issued by Houthi militia institutions in northern Yemen.
- ☞ Analyzing data and conference room papers (CRPs) of the United Nations Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen.

Section I: Violations of International Humanitarian Law

The current armed conflict in Yemen is described as a non-international armed conflict. Therefore, national legislation, as well as the provisions of international humanitarian law and specifically the common article III provisions of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, are relevant legal frameworks that must be applied and followed by the Houthi militia; in addition to the provisions of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, adopted on 12 August 1949 relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts. The Houthi militia is required to respect the rules of customary international humanitarian law that also applies in non-international armed conflicts, and the rules it contains related to the principles of discrimination, proportionality, humanity, the protection of civilians, and people who are unable to fight.

1. Targeting civilians

Civilians in Yemen bear the brunt of the armed conflict more than others. Nearly eight years after the armed conflict, more than 64 thousand civilians have been killed (see figure 1), including some 15 thousand dead and nearly 50 wounded most of them are women and children, while we confirm that the casualty figures may be higher, but the lack of reporting and documentation makes us get little information about the victims who were killed.

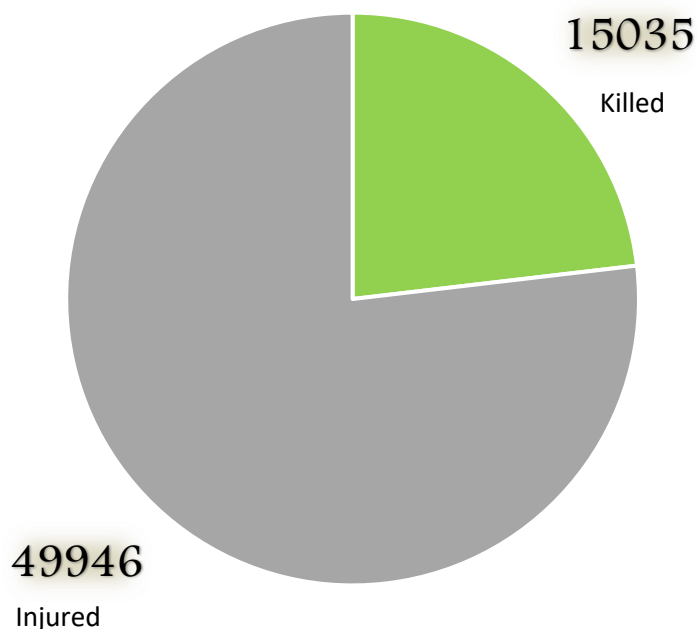


Figure 1: Civilian casualties killed by Houthi militia

The period from 2014 to 2016, which is the period that followed the coup of the Houthi militia against the legitimate government led by Abed Rabbo Mansour at that time, witnessed the highest number of civilian casualties (Figure II), according to the documentation of Maat, about 11,244 dead and about 34,620 injured, followed by the period from January 2017 to December 2019, in which about 2720 dead and about 13,000 civilians were injured, and the targeting of civilians declined in 2020 and 2021 due to the Corona pandemic and the subsequent periods of ceasefire and armistice that entered into force on April 2, 2022, although the Houthis did not abide by it⁴.



Figure 2 Civilian victims killed by Houthi militia from 2014 to 2019

The years from 2020 to 2022 witnessed a lower number of civilian casualties (see figure III), as in 2022, about 861 civilians were killed while 432 were injured. In 2021, 714 civilians were killed,

⁴ اعتمدت الأرقام الخاصة بقتل المدنيين على إحصاء اللجنة الوطنية للتحقيق في ادعاءات انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان بجانب بعض التقارير المحلية وتوثيق مؤسسة ماعت

the majority of them women and children, while 235 other civilians were injured. In 2020, 751 civilians were killed, while 404 others were injured.

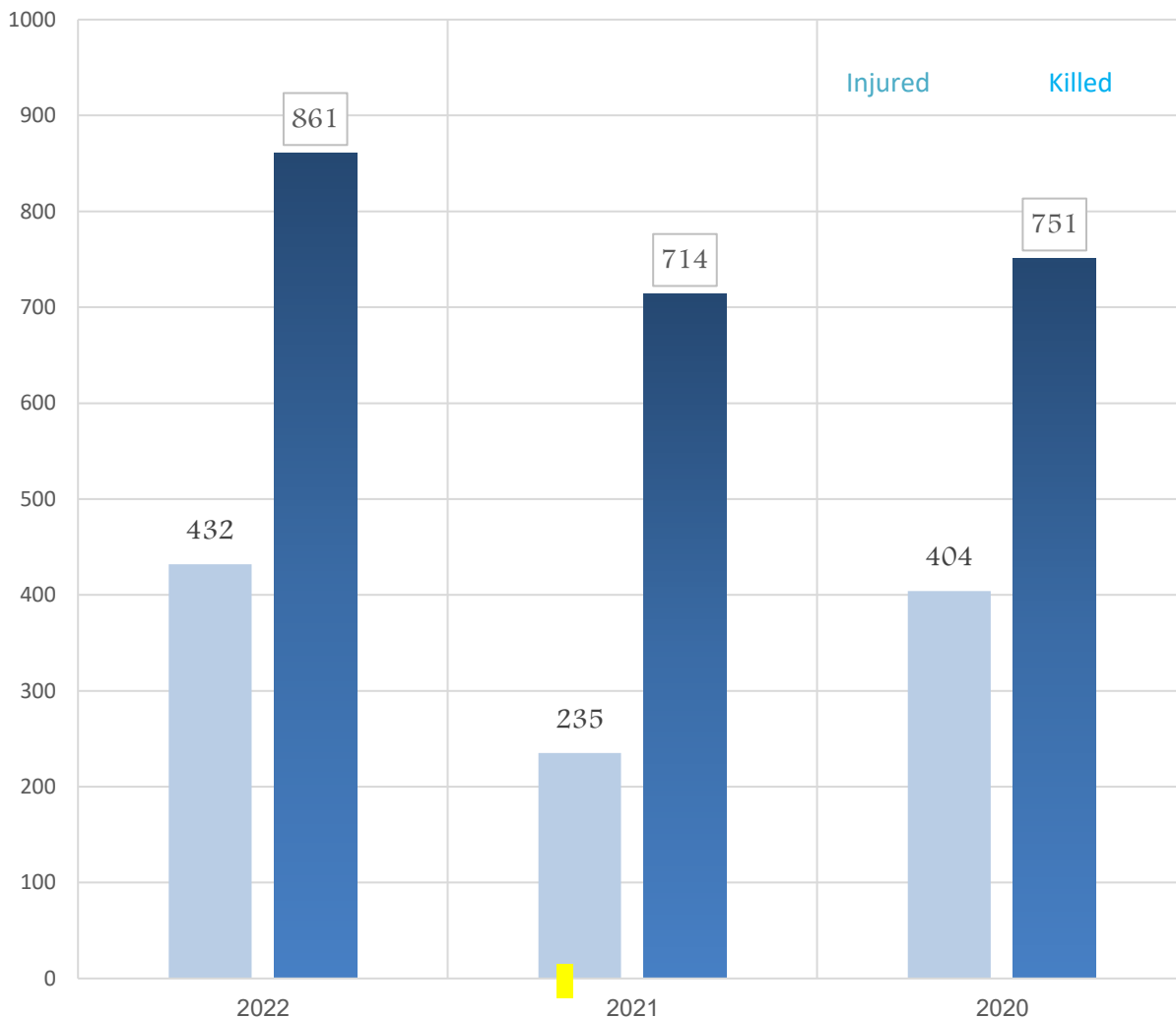


Figure 3 Civilian victims killed by Houthi militia from 2020 to 2022

In its indiscriminate attacks on civilians, the Houthi militia relied on the remnants of the arsenal of weapons seized by the Yemeni army after its coup against the government. Besides the use of Iranian-made explosive weapons during their bombing of civilians (figure IV), this has

exacerbated the number of casualties⁵. Houthi attacks include the use of artillery and missiles in addition to drones, landmines, explosive devices, small arms and light weapons. In addition the use of cluster munitions, which are prohibited weapons under international conventions and customary law because they target people indiscriminately and do not distinguish between

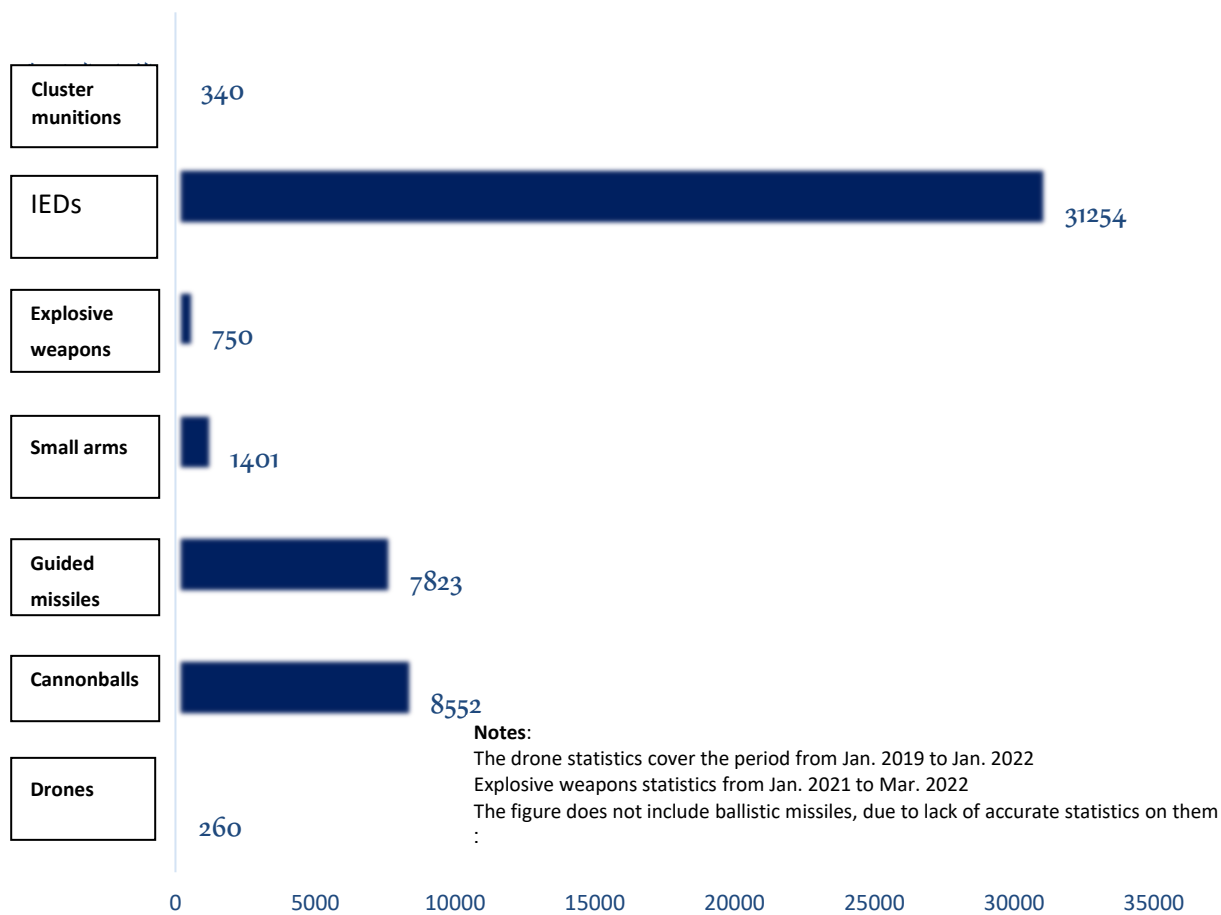


Figure 4 Pattern of weapons used by the Houthi militia in some attacks targeting civilians

civilian and military⁶.

It is noted from the previous figure that the Houthi militia used explosive devices fiercely, they used these devices more than 31,000 times. This is followed by 8,552 artillery shells and 7,823 guided missiles. The militia also used drones in 260 attacks, noting a single attack may consist of a squadron of 20 drones. The use of these weapons, including drones, by the Houthi militia

⁵ Yemen's Houthis and the Expansion of Iran's Axis of Resistance, <https://bit.ly/3ZHE3bT>

⁶ EXPLAINER: What danger do cluster bombs pose? <https://bit.ly/3LczNN6>

had serious effects on civilians, and most of the civilians who were victims of indiscriminate shelling are still suffering from serious injuries, as some of them had a leg amputated, while others lost their eyes⁷.

Table 1: Some incidents of targeting of civilians by the Houthi militia

Incident	Date
Gunmen affiliated with the Houthi militia fired a shell at the Old Airport area, west of Taiz, seriously injured three children: Muhammad Nasser Farea, 9 years old, Badr Nasser Al-Majnahi, 8 years old, Their legs were amputated, next to Hashim Nasser Al-Majnahi, 9 years old, and the three children were returning from school when they were injured and still complain of serious injuries due to shrapnel in separate areas of the body.	October 30, 2022
Sniper bullets were fired at a woman in the village of Bani Khaliah. Marwa Abdo Ali Amer Abdel Wahhab, 30, was wounded by shrapnel in her chest and face.	October 2, 2022
A live shooting near Omar mosque in Ezz governorate wounded, Iman Taha Abd-el-Kader, a woman with 40-year-old ⁸ .	February 24, 2022
Two Balsitin rockets of the Houthi militia hit Marib province. What led to three children being hit by shrapnel on their way home from school ⁹ .	February 19, 2022
The Houthis attacked a camp for displaced people using ballistic missiles, resulting in four children and a woman were seriously injured, and one child's leg was amputated	February 13, 2022
The Houthis attacked Marib province with rocket strikes, killing 5 Yemenis and wounding 23 others, including five children.	January 26, 2022

⁷ HOUTHIIATTACKSREPORTINGMONITOR(HARM), <https://www.yemenembassy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Harm.pdf>

⁸ HOUTHIIATTACKSREPORTINGMONITOR(HARM), <https://www.yemenembassy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Harm.pdf>

⁹

<p>Houthi militia bombed a house in the Al-Shamasi residential neighborhood in central Taiz governorate, killing a Yemeni woman and seriously wounding her husband and son.</p>	<p>January 25, 2022</p>
<p>A missile attack on a market in Marib killed three civilians, including a young man 14-year-old. Eight others were injured, including a three-year-old child.</p>	<p>December 25, 2021</p>
<p>The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) office documented three incidents of shelling by sniper of the Houthi militia after the end of the truce on October 2, 2022¹⁰, and these attacks led to the death of civilians, including a child, and injured others¹¹.</p>	<p>October 2, 2022</p>
<p>Shelling of the house of Sheikh Abdul Latif Al-Qabli in Al-Amoud area. As a result, 12 civilians were killed and several others were wounded. Two of the dead were sons of Cain.</p>	<p>October 28, 2021</p>
<p>A ballistic missile attack launched by the Houthis on the village of Al-Jarasha in Al-Jubbah district. They used 20 mortar shells and Katyusha rockets, wounding dozens of civilians.</p>	<p>October 27, 2021</p>
<p>Two Houthi missiles target civilian homes in Marib, and a third missile falls on a camp for displaced people.</p>	<p>October 3, 2021</p>
<p>The Houthis attacked with two drones, a popular market in Marib Governorate, resulting in the wounding of more than 10 civilians, including women and children¹².</p>	<p>May 24, 2021</p>
<p>The Houthis attacked with two drones that targeted a restaurant in the Al-Koud area in Al Hodeidah Governorate as well, and the targeting resulted in the killing of 2 civilians and the wounding of seven others¹³.</p>	<p>May 17, 2021</p>

¹⁰ War crimes committed by Yemen's Houthis since truce expiry: U.N., <https://reut.rs/3ZO1G26>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² ميليشيا الحوثيين تستهدف سوق شعبي بمسيرة مفخخة في مأرب، الوطن، 24 مايو 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3jG92Ca>

¹³ Ibid

The Houthis attacked with a drone in the Taif area of the Al-Duraimi district in southwestern Yemen, resulting in the death of Abdullah Faisal 20-year-old and injuring 7 other people¹⁴.

May 16, 2021

On October 7, 2022, Maat also obtained the names of victims of Houthi militia aircraft that bombed a car carrying citizens in the village in Hadramaut governorate, which resulted in 8 people being injured, including critical cases:

Table 2 Names of those injured in the bombing of the Houthi militia

Victim's Name	Age
Abdul Rahman Muhammad Yusuf	36 years old
Mohamed Youssef Ahmed Baqi	70 years old
Salem Hamid Ahmed Baqi	70 years old
Diwan Qaid Muhammad Ali	45 years old
Qaid Muhammad Ali	13 years old
Fawwaz Qaid	32 years old
Salem Hamed Salem	28 years old
Khidr Qaid	22 years old

By analyzing previous statements, the Houthi militia has never adhered to the principle of proportionality and necessity, which are fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, which grant civilians protection from military attacks. However, the Houthis did not discriminate between a military target in the context of war and a civilian one¹⁵. The investigations of the Security Council Panel of Experts on Yemen into five Houthi attacks on civilians in 2022 concluded that the Houthis violated the principles of prudence, discrimination,

¹⁴ استخدام قوات الحوثيين للطيران المسيير في هجومها على المدنيين بالحديدة تطور خطير يستوجب المساءلة، سام للحقوق والحريات، 19 مايو 2021، على الرابط التالي <https://bit.ly/3CjXc7V>

¹⁵ THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONALITY, <https://bit.ly/3miNM9t>

and proportionality guaranteed under international humanitarian law¹⁶. Civilian casualty statistics confirm that the Houthis did not comply with the guarantees assured to civilians under international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and Article 3 common to those Conventions.

2. Forced Deportation of Civilians

The Houthi militia is still practicing forcible deportation of civilians in northern Yemen, and the number of families who have been displaced from 2018 to February 2023 has reached about 5,336 families in different regions of northern Yemen (see Figure V). From 1 January to 4 February 2023, the Houthi militia deported 1,000 families consisting of 6,408 individuals, including women, children, and the elderly, according to The International Organization for Migration (IOM) data. The year 2019 witnessed the largest movement of displacement resulting from forced displacement, as the Houthi militia displaced 4,800 families in northern Yemen these arbitrary actions are contrary to article 17 of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts. This forced displacement of civilians creates religious beliefs of the Houthi militia its content this property owned by individuals who don't like- them minded is a spoil, and this forced displacement and theft of other people's property in areas under the militia's control is a source of wealth for the group's leaders.

¹⁶Final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2140, Para 94, <https://bit.ly/3Jggqyv>

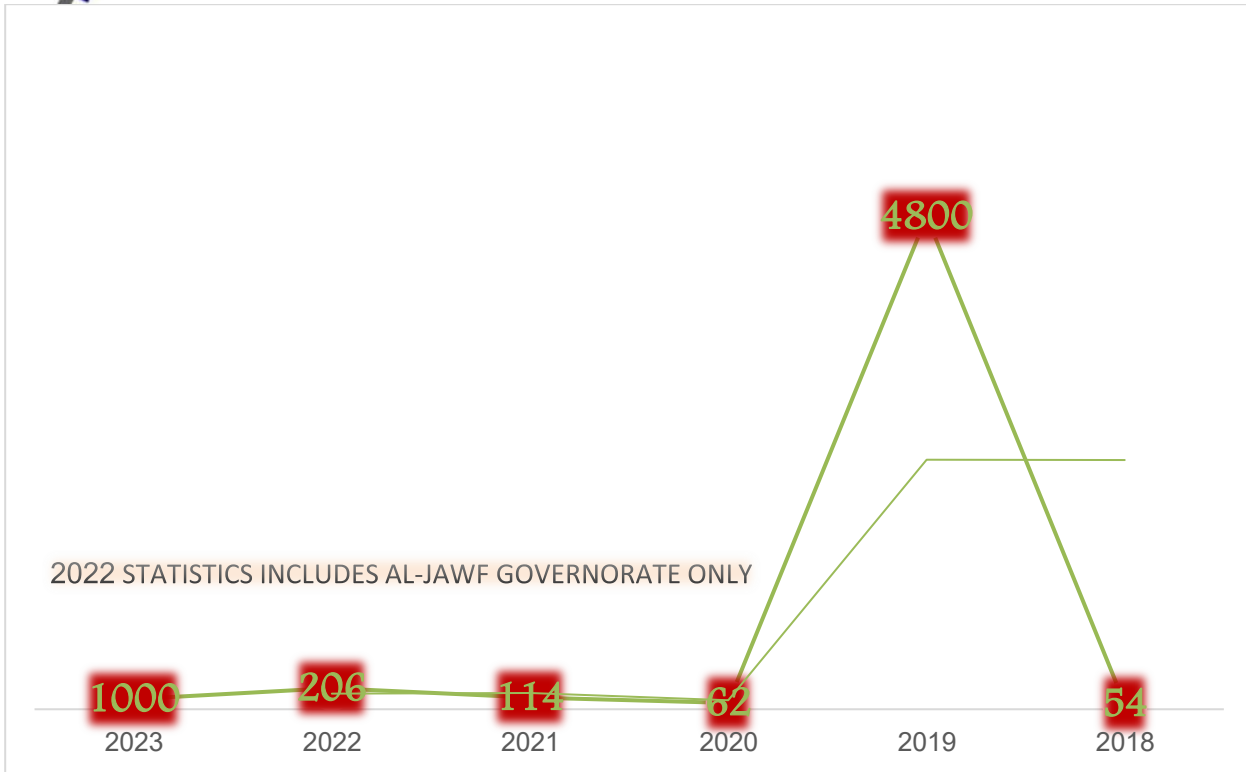


Figure 5 Number of displaced families distributed by year

The methods of forced displacement of civilians practiced by the Houthi militia included booby-trapping houses; Forcing families to leave their homes by force, and according to international law, displacement can be justified in some cases, and families must be given specific guarantees, including informing those affected of the reasons and procedures for displacement and allowing them to appeal the decision to evacuate their homes, through judicial review and fairly compensating them. However, the Houthi militia did not comply with these guarantees. On 5 August, the Houthi militia forcibly displaced the people of four villages in the southeast of the Bait al-Faqih district, south of the Hodeidah governorate¹⁷. Abu al-Batoul Faisal, who was appointed by the Houthi militia as director of the Endowment Office of the Bait Al-Faqih District, issued leases to expatriates and influential personalities in partnership with (Yahya Sahl) the director general of the District, in order to control civilian homes contrary to the provisions of Additional Protocol to 1949 to the Geneva Conventions.

3. Destruction of Civilian Objects

Civilian objects and properties have not been spared the unfair practices and procedures of the Houthi militia, and according to Article 52 of the First Additional Protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions, civilian objects are all objects that do not constitute a military target. The Houthis

¹⁷ <https://bit.ly/3kNB16H> تقرير يرصد خروقات مليشيا الحوثي في الحديدة خلال شهر أغسطس،

did not observe this protection granted to these objects and deliberately destroyed it. The civilian objects in this study are civilian-owned homes, hospitals, and educational buildings. The number of hospitals and health centers that were totally or partially destroyed by the Houthis reached about 843 by the end of 2022, which led to about 50% of the health sector hospitals in Yemen being discharged from service, according to the data of the World Health Organization¹⁸. On the other hand, residential homes were the most affected during the armed conflict in Yemen, Maat documented about 9 thousand homes damaged by the Houthi militia attacks, with some other estimates indicating that the militia was responsible for the destruction of 21 thousand of homes. Some 2,372 educational facilities were also damaged by indiscriminate shelling by the Houthi militia. These attacks varied, including total or partial shelling, or incursion. Article 147 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 prohibits targeting and destroying civilian objects, and Article 25 of the 1907 Hague Regulations prohibits and criminalizes the bombing of cities, villages, homes, and civilian infrastructure in any way.

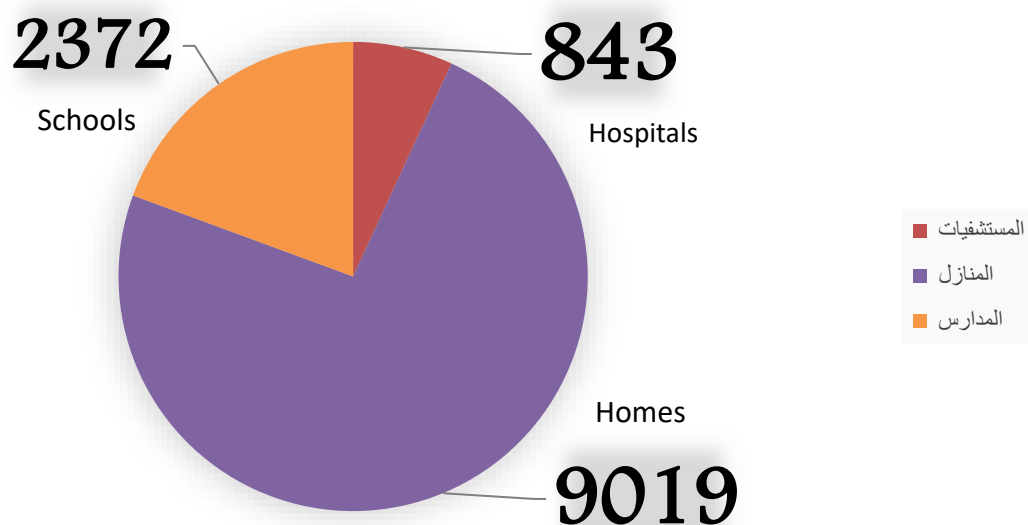


Figure 6 Loss of civilian objects

Specific incidents in which the Houthi militia targeted civilian infrastructure, it was documented by Maat when on 11 February 2023 the Houthis led a campaign to blow up the homes of residents in the village of Sirwah in Ma’rib Governorate, which included six homes owned by civilians, and the militia used explosive devices to destroy these homes. On July 22, 2022, the Civil Authority for Victims of Homes in Yemen reported that the Houthi militia bombed three houses of citizens of the Dhi Silah tribe in the Al-Asha district of Amran governorate in northern

¹⁸ Health Sector in Yemen – Policy Note, Page 1, <https://bit.ly/3SVHG1>

Yemen¹⁹. On July 17, 2022, the Houthi militia began destroying and bombing eight houses in the village of Khubza, which led to the death of about 18 civilians, including women and children. In December 2020, the Houthis blew up 14 houses in the Madarat area in western Taiz.

Besides, the Houthi militia targeted educational facilities where, on 12 February 2022, it blew up a 26 September school located in the north of the city of Hais, south of Hodeidah Governorate, western Yemen, by using dynamite remotely, which led to denying students access to education; On December 12, 2022, a Samad 1 Houthi drone attacked Al-Salam School in Hajjah Governorate, and this attack resulted in the death of the seven-year-old Youssef Abdo Bishi, both Sultan Ahmed Bishi, and Ahmed Abdullah Bishi 10 years old. The militia also attacked medical facilities such as Al-Safwa Hospital in Taiz and the Teachers Institute in the Cairo Directorate with anti-aircraft guns; On November 6, 2019, a hospital run by Doctors without Borders in the city of Mocha, west of Taiz Governorate, was partially destroyed due to munitions fired from military sites and warehouses run by the Houthi militia²⁰; On 29 January 2023, Houthi militia gunmen stormed Dar al-Shifa private hospital and looted its contents²¹.

4. Torture

International humanitarian law, in particular article 4 (2 a) of Additional Protocol II to the four Geneva Conventions, prohibits attacks on the physical and mental integrity of persons, in particular cruel treatment or torture. However, it was noted that the Houthis did not actually abide by this article, and more than that, they made torture a systematic policy in the prisons under their control and in the informal detention centers they supervised. Maat concluded that the Houthis systematically practiced torture through the confessions of some militia leaders themselves and testimonies seen by Maat and attributed some reports to the practice of torture in detention centers under the direction of Interior Minister Abdul Karim al-Houthi in the unrecognized government of the militia. It is important to mention some facts indicating this systematic practice.

On January 4, 2023, for example, and in an acknowledgment of what is happening, the Houthis, through the spokesperson of the Houthi Ministry of Interior, which is not recognized internationally, said that the security forces in the Sahar region in Saada governorate in northern Yemen kidnapped a citizen named Ibrahim Yahya Al-Thamani, subjected him to arbitrary arrest and tortured him until he died²². We examined the video that was traded regarding the incident of torture him, and we found signs of torture on his body. However, the

¹⁹ ميليشيا الحوثي تفجر 3 منازل لمدنيين في عمران، العربية، <https://bit.ly/3ZrKklm>

²⁰ MSF hospital partially destroyed, <https://bit.ly/3EZxklf>

²¹ Attacks on Health Care, Page 3, <https://bit.ly/3FIZ8Av>

²² الناطق الرسمي لوزارة الداخلية يوضح قضية وفاة السجين إبراهيم يحيى محمد الثماني بمحافظة صعدة، <https://bit.ly/41SrKtE>

investigations opened by the militia in this incident have not yet led to redress for the victims' families.

On January 21, a representative of the Houthi militia informed the family of a Yemeni citizen, Munaser Al-Rasas, he was kidnapped while returning to his family's home in Al-Bayda Governorate. Friends and his family said that he had been tortured in an illegal detention center in Sanaa, and they added that the Houthis had ignored repeated requests to inform them of his location before his death.

Maat also reviewed the medical report issued by Hospital 48 in the capital, Sana'a, which revealed that the prisoner Omar Ahmed had died on November 16, 2020, and the Houthi militia don't announce his death until two years later, and the militia informed his family that he was doing well, and the abuses suffered by the prisoner before his death, he was subjected to torture, electric shocks, and smashing his head. Before announcing his death, the militia's gunmen had practiced extortion for about two years after deluding the prison supervisor that the prisoner had financial needs, and his family was constantly paying them without knowing any other details about it. Ignoring of the investigation of these incidents, which constitute crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute, has been prevalent, and it has encouraged the militiamen to repeat these practices.

The forms of cruel treatment and torture have varied in the prisons of the Houthi militia, including prolonged sleep deprivation, severe beatings and slapping in a way that degrades the dignity of the detainee arbitrarily, kicking with the feet, solitary confinement, not being exposed to sunlight for long periods, beatings with whips and electric cables, Electric shock, as well as confinement in narrow rooms where it is difficult to sit, in addition to exposing detainees arbitrarily to extreme cold in winter and pouring cold water on them²³, as well as exposure to scorching sunlight in summer, as well as forcing arbitrarily detained prisoners to squat, which is a painful position for detainees as they remain in this position for long periods. Sexual assaults are also practiced against women in the prisons designated for them, especially those who oppose the policy of the Houthi and some human rights defenders²⁴.

Table (3): Prisons Supervised by the Houthi Militia

Governorate	Prisons
	Sana'a Central Prison

²³ Houthi prisons: torture without supervision, <https://bit.ly/3JpHJJA>

²⁴ Ibid

Sanaa	Habra prison
	Military prison
	Moalem prison
	Sana'a Governorate Correctional Facility
	Supreme prison
	The remand prison in Sana'a
	Al-Thawrah prison
	Al-Hatarish prison
Dhamar	Central Prison in Dhamar Governorate
	Political Security Prison
	Criminal Investigation Prison
	Harran prison (secret)
	Al-Shuna Prison (secret)
	Community College Jail (Confidential)
	Ayshah Clinic (secret)
	Deterrence Prison (Secret)
	The Sahar Prison (secret)
Professor Dhamar Sports Prison (secret)	
Al-Bayda	Ahmadi prison
	Amiriya Castle prison
	Central Prison in Rada
Taiz Governorate	Al-Saleh prison
	Dar Al-Hilal Prison
Hodeidah	Hodeidah Central Prison
	Hanish prison
Ibb	Central Prison in Ibb

Rayma	Central Prison in Rima
Hajjah	Hajjah Central Prison
Al Mahwit	Central Prison in Al-Mahwit
Amran	Central Prison in Amran

5. Siege of cities

International humanitarian law, in particular Article 13 of the Second Optional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, prohibits the imposition of sieges on civilians, in the context of non-international armed conflicts. However, the Houthi militia imposed a blockade on some provinces in Yemen²⁵. Taiz Governorate is the third largest city in Yemen in terms of population, with more than 4 million people. It is still a victim of the siege imposed on it by the Houthi militia for eight years. The consequences of this siege affected about 75% of the population in Taiz Governorate. The imposed blockade has led to an increase in transportation time, the roads which took 10 minutes before the blockade currently take 10 hours in alternative mountain roads, which, inter alia, hindered patients' access to health centers and hospitals, besides food prices rising by more than 32% due to higher transportation costs only²⁶. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)²⁷, fuel prices have risen sharply, water supply to the city has decreased by 41 % and the blockade has affected some 4,144 university students, hindering their access to university²⁸. The closure of roads also delayed the arrival of humanitarian aid to the neediest, what is the depth of the already terrible humanitarian crisis. Some of the humanitarian workers have died as a result of indiscriminate shooting at checkpoints. For example, Muhammad Ali Salem of Oxfam died at one of the checkpoints between the roads leading to the Taiz Governorate Directorate.²⁹

²⁵ هل يحظر القانون الدولي الإنساني المعاصر استخدام أسلوب الحصار العسكري؟، <https://bit.ly/3ZItNQ2>

²⁶ حملة الطريق حق انساني، <https://www.facebook.com/YMST.Taiz>

²⁷ تعز ملف التنمية الحضري، برنامج الأمم المتحدة للمستوطنات البشرية، 74، <https://bit.ly/3JfRZUt>

²⁸ الطريق حق انساني، <https://bit.ly/3YmcpzD>

²⁹ Fueling Conflict Analyzing the human impact of the war in Yemen, Page 26, <https://bit.ly/3yflzTX>

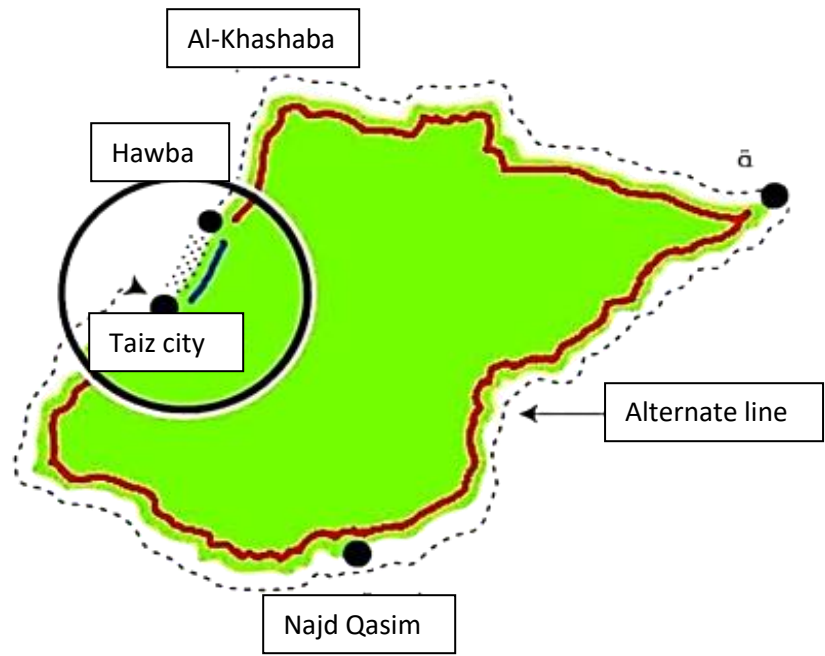


Figure 7 Map showing the depth of the distance imposed by the siege on Taiz

The Houthi militia not only used the siege against Taiz Governorate, but also surrounded civilians in Ma'rib province. In October 2021, for example, the Houthi militia besieged 35,000 civilians in the Al-Abdiya area for at least three weeks, and prohibited them from entering or leaving the city. It also refused food supplies to enter³⁰. The continued imposition of the siege on the city of Taiz means more innocent civilian casualties, especially the sick and the elderly who are prevented from obtaining medical supplies, it also exacerbates the food problem, which is essentially a problem in cities that are not under siege.

³⁰ Yemen: Houthi Forces Attack, Displace Villagers, <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-houthi-forces-attack-displace-villagers-enar>

Section II: Violations related to International Human Rights Law

There is a consensus among Member States of the United Nations endorsed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights that whenever armed groups exercise territorial control over certain areas and begin to exercise state-like functions, they are bound by international human rights law, including respect for international human rights conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights³¹.

In its written correspondence addressed to the Group of Experts on Yemen Houthi militia acknowledged human rights obligations. It stated that its forces respect their international obligations to protect civilians under international humanitarian and international human rights law. It also noted of the applicability of human rights treaties ratified by the Yemeni government to its management³².

However, since the Houthi militia took control of the capital, Sana'a, and the subsequent control over other governorates in northern Yemen, it has not adhered to these obligations. It carried out arbitrary, summary, and sometimes extrajudicial executions imposed various restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, restricted freedom of the press, and expanded the practice of arbitrary detention against human rights defenders and political activists. It imposed restrictions on economic and social rights, such as the right to work, health, and education.

1. Summary and arbitrary executions

The Houthi militia is still influencing the judiciary in the areas under its control to issue politicized and unfair rulings. From January 2017 to December 2022, courts under Houthi control handed down 200 death sentences after trials that lacked the minimum standards for fair or equitable trials. In specific incidents, on December 12, 2022, the Criminal Court in Sana'a issued death sentences by firing squad against 16 people in Saada Governorate on charges related to what the court called "aiding the countries of aggression and communicating with them to harm the war, political and economic status of the Republic of Yemen".

Table (4): Names of persons sentenced to death in December 2022

Name	Verdict
Ali Issa	execution

³¹ Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014 Detailed findings of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, Para 29, <https://bit.ly/3IVG6lh>

³² Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014, Para 82, <https://bit.ly/3Fqg2xV>

Adnan Ahmed
Bader Mohamed Mahmoud
Zaid Mohamed Salah
Faisal Sadiq Saif
Muhammed Hussein Abdullah
Sadiq Saleh Ali Muharraq
Saleh Ahmed is small
Abdul Ghani Ali Issa
Muhammad Yahya Mohsen al-Maliki
Muhammad Ahsan Hassan Hilal
Salem Ahmed Ali Dael
Abdul Razeq Rajab Ali Muharraq
Muhammad Yahya Al-Ghawi
Fahd Yehia Gibran
Walid Yahya Hussein









In other incidents, on September 18, 2021, the Public Prosecution carried out the death penalty against nine people, including a minor, in the capital, Sana'a, by firing squad for involvement in the killing of the group's leader, Saleh al-Sammad, and on other charges related to espionage and the transfer of information to the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen³³.

Fifth Schedule: Persons sentenced to death in September 2021

N	Name	The profession	Age
1	Ibrahim Mohamed Abdullah	Teacher	44years old



³³ إعدام الحوثي 9 أشخاص بينهم قاصر يهز اليمن اند بينت عربية، 18 سبتمبر 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3BIsG7h>

2	Ali Al-Qawzi		Secretary of the local council in Hodeidah	43years old
3	Abdul Malik Ahmed Hamid عام 55		Police officer	55years old
4	Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Qawzi		Social figure	46years old
5	Muhammad Yahya Noah		Governmental public servant	46years old
6	Muhammad Al-Mashkhari		Literacy teacher	47years old
7	Abdul Aziz Ali Al-Aswad		student	18years old
8	Muhammad Abdul Rahman Abdullah		Fish seller	23years old
9	Muhammad Khaled Haig		Armed forces soldier	35years old

The Houthi group also issued death sentences against ten teachers who were in prisons under its supervision, including a school principal. In some sessions, death sentences were issued, such as in the trials of some Baha'i leaders; the accused could not attend the sessions or communicate with the lawyer assigned to defend his judgments without observing any fair trial procedures. Summary and arbitrary executions violate the provisions of international humanitarian law. According to Common Article 3, executions of civilians in non-international

armed conflicts are prohibited, and gross violations of Common Article 3 are considered war crimes according to the Rome Statute³⁴.

2. Violations of freedom of opinion and expression

The right to freedom of opinion and expression is guaranteed under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights³⁵. However, the Houthi militia exposed this right to various violations. On January 11, 2023, the Criminal Court in Sana'a began the trial of four bloggers on the YouTube platform, Mustafa Al-Mamri, Ahmed Hajar, Ahmed Allaw, and Hammoud Al-Misbahi³⁶, after they criticized the corruption in the governorates under the control of the militia. The indictment against these bloggers included charges such as "publishing false news that disturbs public security. They were also accused of harming the public interest by creating and managing YouTube channels serving what the indictment called "the continuous aggression in its war and siege on Yemen." The penalty for these bloggers may reach the death penalty under the Crimes and Penal Code in force in the areas under the control of the Houthi militia³⁷.

Maat also noticed the militia's mobilization, in conjunction with their arrest of its supporters on social media, to exaggerate the profits these bloggers earn from Facebook. In the context of the restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, about 80 journalists, magazines, and radio stations have been suspended since the beginning of the conflict. In addition to blocking 200 local and foreign news websites, according to Yemen Net, the Security and Intelligence Service of the Houthi militia is responsible for blocking websites³⁸. For example, on July 11, 2022, the Houthi militia stormed the Voice of Yemen radio station in Sana'a. They seized the radio's broadcasting equipment and closed the radio's headquarters, although the radio had previously obtained a court ruling to restore broadcasting³⁹.

Regarding freedom of expression on the Internet, the Houthi militia imposed successive restrictions on the Internet after it took control of the telecommunications sector, and then nationalized the Saba Phone company and appointed Houthi leaders in the company's board of directors so that these leaders liquidate the company's cadres who do not belong to the doctrine of the Houthi militia. Maat has also reviewed independent reports stating that the Houthis have blocked all government websites affiliated with the legitimate government, news websites, channels, and all local media opposing the Houthi militia. The militia used the Ministry of Communications and Yemen Net as "internet providers" to control the flow of information

³⁴ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, [https://legal.un.org/icc/statute/english/rome_statute\(e\).pdf](https://legal.un.org/icc/statute/english/rome_statute(e).pdf)

³⁵ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19, <https://bit.ly/3YnK245>

³⁶ منظمات مجتمع مدني تستنكر اختطاف ميليشيا الحوثي أربعة من مدوني مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي في صنعاء، <https://almasdaronline.com/articles/266467>

³⁷ قرار جمهوري بالقانون رقم (12) لسنة 1994م بشأن الجرائم والعقوبات، <https://bit.ly/3SWb8hy>

³⁸ A report highlighting the policy of blocking news websites in Yemen, <https://bit.ly/3kEWGOo>

³⁹ اقتحام إذاعة صوت اليمن في صنعاء ونهب محتوياتها، <https://bit.ly/3YuPVwZ>

to and from areas under its control, to withhold specific information from citizens, and direct public opinion in areas under militia control⁴⁰.

3. Press freedom violations

The Houthi group follows an approach that relies on confiscating all opinions of journalists in areas under their control and has implemented a campaign based on outdated slogans, “to be with us or against us;” These slogans contradict the right to freedom of the press, and the profession of journalism in Yemen has completely lost its meaning. Journalists were subjected to killings, death threats, arbitrary arrest, and unfair death sentences against them. Maat counted the killing of 35 journalists in Yemen from 2015 until the end of 2022. The Houthis were responsible for 90% of the killings, and it was distributed to gunmen affiliated with it to plan the assassination of these journalists. Most of the journalists were assassinated due to previous threats from the Houthi militia before carrying out the assassination, which was revealed by the testimonies of the friends and families of the victim.

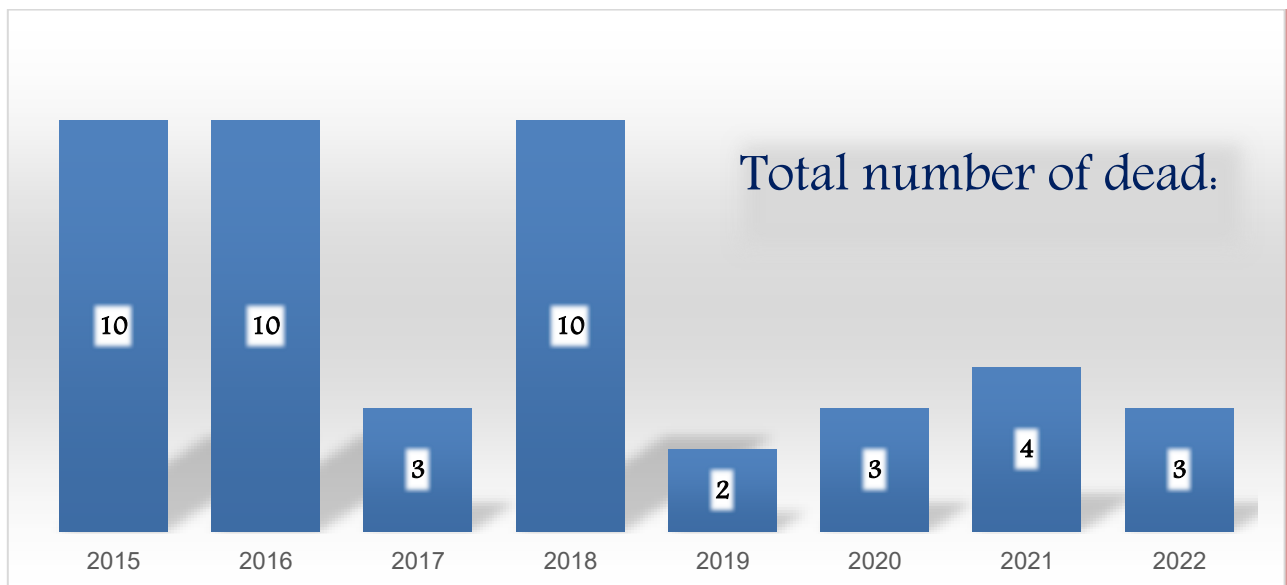


Figure 8 Journalists killed by the Houthi militia

On April 11, 2020, four journalists are awaiting the execution of the death penalty issued against them; the Specialized Criminal Court in Sana'a, Yemen, sentenced four Yemeni journalists to death in a sham trial that lacks the minimum fair trial standards. The charges were based on political motives and related to espionage and cooperation in favor of what the operative judge described as "aggression" and spreading false news. The ruling was issued without the presence or knowledge of the legal team of lawyers and without specifying a date for the implementation

⁴⁰ سيطرة الحوثيين على قطاع الاتصالات في اليمن، ص50، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3SUvc3L>

of the ruling. On October 30, the Houthi-appointed Public Prosecutor ordered their release as part of a prisoner exchange deal, but they remained in detention⁴¹.

Nearly three years after this verdict, the four journalists are still awaiting execution. The four journalists were arrested and forcibly disappeared on June 9, 2015. They were working at the Qasr al-Ahlam Hotel in the capital, Sana'a, where they had to work after the Houthis cut off the internet in most areas under the group's control. The four journalists have been detained without charge or trial in flagrant violation of Article 14(c) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that "any person subjected to arrest shall be tried without undue delay."

Independent reports have warned that the four journalists may lose their lives at any time; however, it is noticeable that the Houthi militia uses these journalists as pressure and bargaining chips in any future negotiations, whether political or within the framework of a prisoner exchange; that may endanger their lives, especially given the lack of health care for the four journalists.

On September 6, 2022, the brother of the journalist Tawfiq Al-Mansouri, authorized Maat to adopt his case before international human rights mechanisms. Tawfiq Al-Mansoori is one of the four journalists sentenced to death. He is a 37-year-old journalist who worked before his arrest at Al-Masdar Media, a local press organization. On July 27, according to his brother's testimony, he received reliable information from the family of another detainee of the Houthi group, in which he confirmed that Al-Mansouri's health condition was severely deteriorating because he was prevented from obtaining the medicines intended for him.

Al-Mansoori mainly suffers from diabetes, heart disease, and shortness of breath. His condition requires health care and a doctor to supervise his condition. He was detained with his colleagues at the beginning of his detention in the Political Security prison of the Houthi intelligence and then moved to the Central Security Base prison of the Houthi group. According to the testimonies of Al-Mansouri's family, which Maat reviewed, the director of the Central Security Base threatened the journalist with slow death in detention.

Abd al-Khaliq Omran is a 40-year-old Yemeni journalist. He worked for a local press site in Yemen and ran a site called the Yemen Revolution. Days before his arrest, he conducted interviews with people who opposed the group. Maat has seen testimonies confirming that he suffers from frequent spinal pain and kidney problems, which require specialized care, as mentioned in Rule 27 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules). Nevertheless, the prison administration did not call a doctor to supervise his health condition, in gross disregard of the principles and provisions of international law that the Houthis must respect.

The third journalist sentenced to death is Akram Al-Walidi, a 39-year-old Yemeni journalist who worked for news websites and his work for the Yemeni news agency Saba. He

⁴¹ اليمن: يجب على السلطات الحوثية إطلاق سراح أربعة صحفيين محكوم عليهم بالإعدام، <https://bit.ly/3SOz1ri>

was forcibly arrested on June 9, 2015, and remained forcibly disappeared for more than six months.

He went on hunger strike alongside his three other colleagues, forcing the Houthis to transfer him to the Political Security prison of the Houthi intelligence service. According to testimonies that Maat showed to Al-Walidi's family, he suffers from colon problems, which the prison administration did not allow him to treat. It refused to take him to the hospital earlier after his health condition deteriorated.

The last journalist is Harith Hameed, a 34-year-old Yemeni journalist who worked for a local website and has now stopped working and also worked for the Sana'a Center for Human Rights. He was forcibly arrested on June 9, 2015. He was subjected to various types of abuse inside the Houthi detention centers after the arrest process the prison administration prevented his family from seeing him. In December 2017, his mother died of grief over being prevented from visiting.

The previous facts against the four journalists illustrate the flagrant violations against freedom of the press in the de facto control of the Houthis by confiscating all independent opinions and imposing a general atmosphere of intimidation and intimidation against freedom of opinion, expression, and circulation of information. The four journalists were deprived of all their legal rights as they were not allowed to communicate with a lawyer or represent them legally before the court in contravention of Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This practice also contravened the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, and he had only contacted their family a few times and was not allowed to visit them.

The four journalists were denied sufficient food, safe drinking water, and proper health care. They were subjected to appalling forms of cruel and degrading treatment that amounted to torture, which is contrary to the principles and provisions of the Convention against Torture and Article VII of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Other practices included solitary confinement and incommunicado detention.

In addition to the death sentences, the Houthi militia arbitrarily arrested some journalists for prolonged periods and only released some after paying heavy fines or through the intervention of mediators. Journalist Younes Abdel Salam spent a year and four months in Houthi prisons. In the details of the testimony, which Maat reviewed, the journalist was kidnapped on August 4, 2021, on the main street near Sana'a International Airport and then moved to a detention center.

He was detained inside the airport, where he remained for four days before he was transferred to the so-called Security and Intelligence Service. During his detention there, he was subjected to various types of abuse, including insults, ill-treatment, and psychological intimidation, to extract confessions from him⁴². He was prevented from communicating with a lawyer or his family or receiving the medical medicines he needed.

⁴² شهادة الصحفي يونس عبد السلام، <https://bit.ly/3J1MAPz>

The violations that the journalists faced in the Houthi areas are fundamentally inconsistent with the right to life contained in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the practices that led to their arrest are also inconsistent with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which It grants everyone the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to obtain, receive and impart ideas through any media without restriction to geographical boundaries. The safety of journalists and the fight against impunity in arbitrary practices against them also intersect with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

4. Arbitrary Detention

Local Yemeni organizations' estimates indicate that more than 4,000 people are still arbitrarily detained in prisons under the control of the Houthi militia⁴³. According to the testimonies of the individuals who were released in prisoner exchange deals, and other testimonies that Maat reviewed, these detainees are subjected to various forms of intimidation, abuse, and psychological torture, which contradicts the militia's pledges to provide adequate guarantees to prisoners in custody.

In specific incidents, Maat obtained the testimony of journalist and media personality Hamza Al-Jubaihi, who was released by the Houthi militia on September 29, 2021, as part of a prisoner exchange deal. He was arrested by the Houthis on August 31, 2016, and sentenced to death on April 12, 2017, by the Criminal Court in Sana'a, on charges of spying for the legitimate government in Yemen and providing them with information about the Houthi group in Sana'a.

The latter remained in the prisons of the Houthis for about 61 months, more than five years, in four different prisons, starting with the National Security Apparatus prison in Sana'a from the date of his arrest until August 14, 2016. Then, he moved to the Political Security prison in Sana'a and stayed there until 6 October 2020, until he was transferred to the Exchange Prison of the Central Security in Sana'a; he remained there until September 26, 2021, before being transferred to Al-Saleh Prison in Sana'a. There he remained only three days before his release on September 29, 2021, in a local exchange deal for families between the Houthis and Taiz Governorate.

According to his testimonies that he told Maat about the period he spent in the four prisons, subjected to numerous violations, including extracting confessions from him for crimes he did not commit, physical torture through beating with electric cables and wires, electric shocks, and sleep deprivation, insulting and cursing with obscene w racist, sectarian, and sectarian insults, in addition, to psychologically terrorizing him during the period of detention by sending him negative messages about his family.

Mrs. Fatima Saleh, 34, is still detained in the intelligence prison after gunmen affiliated with the Houthi militia took her on August 14, 2022, to the Kemim Hotel while moving from

⁴³ شكوك حول ما يجري... الحوثي يذفن جثثاً ويدّعي، <https://bit.ly/3yokJnQ>

Sana'a to Aden Governorate; accusations limit writing the report in complete disregard of international law⁴⁴.

Intisar Al-Hammadi is also a 21-year-old girl who has been active in previous years on social media to demand social freedom for women, which the Houthi militia considered a challenge to her authority and sectarian ideas. Security forces in civilian clothes arrested her on February 20, 2021, at a checkpoint in the Shamlan area in Sana'a. She was interrogated in a non-human manner at the Criminal Investigation Directorate in Sana'a Governorate. It was reported that she was blindfolded, subjected to other types of physical and verbal abuse, and forced under pressure to confess to crimes she never committed, such as drug possession and prostitution, and then transferred to the women's section of the central prison in Sana'a. There, the prison administration prevented her from contacting her family or lawyer⁴⁵ in contravention of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and the principles and provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

While detained in the central prison in Sana'a, she was subjected to verbal abuse and insults involving gender discrimination and racism by prison guards, who also called her a "whore". On April 21, 2021, "Al-Hammadi" was summoned to the Public Prosecution of the Houthis in Sana'a for interrogation in the presence of her lawyer, Khaled Al-Kamal, after charges were brought against her such as "drug abuse, drug promotion, and prostitution," which she did not confess to before the prosecution⁴⁶.

Intisar Al-Hammadi was slapped by the prison director at the end of the interrogation, while the Public Prosecution prevented her lawyer, Khaled Al-Kamal, from accessing her case file. After repeating the request to the Public Prosecution in Sana'a, an armed member of the group objected on April 27, 2021, and threatened him, asking him to drop this case⁴⁷. On May 26, the legal sector in the Human Resources Department in the capital Sana'a suspended lawyer Khaled Al-Kamal from work for his defense of Intisar Al-Hammadi⁴⁸. In early July 2021, Intisar Al-Hammadi attempted suicide in Sana'a prison, according to her lawyer.

In November 2021, it was reported that Intisar Al-Hammadi attempted suicide in the central prison in Sana'a after the abuses she was subjected to by the so-called "Um Karrar" who is a leader in what is known as the Zainabat Organization. In the same month, the Western Court of Amanat Al-Asimah issued a five-year prison⁴⁹ sentence for Al-Hammadi, confirming the continued detention of Al-Hammadi and the fabricated and unjust sentences issued against her and other opponents and human rights defenders in northern Yemen, following the approach of the Houthi militia, which has persisted in these arbitrary practices as a tool to

⁴⁴ المحام عبد المجيد صبره، <https://bit.ly/3SYa9x8>

⁴⁵ اليمن: ممثلة يمنية محتجزة بشكل تعسفي تواجه خطر "فحص العنصرية" الإجباري، العفو الدولية، 7 مايو 2021، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/37FQv2t>

⁴⁶ نيابة الحوثي تستجوب الفنانة انتصار الحمادي في سجنها، المشهد العربي، 21 أبريل 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3xuEirJ>

⁴⁷ مصدر سبق ذكره، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/37FQv2t>

⁴⁸ محامي انتصار الحمادي يتحدث "المشاهد" على إيقافه عن العمل، المشاهد، 6 يونيو 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/2TZ45dN>

⁴⁹ انتصار الحمادي: محكمة تابعة للحوثيين تقضي بسجن الممثلة عارضة الأزياء اليمنية 5 سنوات، بي بي سي عربي، 8 فبراير 2021، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bbc.in/3lyPcTm>

silence society forcefully with the weapon. These actions portend grave danger to the lives of many in prisons under the supervision of the Houthi group.

The detainees were subjected to other grave human rights violations during detention in overcrowded cells with poor light, were not allowed to go out into the open air, and were exposed to the sun. The detainees also did not receive adequate food, medical care, clean water, sanitation, and rations. Some were subjected to solitary confinement for 20 days to ask the authorities to increase food rations and to go on a hunger strike. In all cases, detainees developed chronic illnesses due to torture, ill-treatment, and inadequate medical care. Some former detainees told Amnesty International that the Houthi prison authorities did not take any preventive measures in light of the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic in Yemen, such as providing masks and other personal protective equipment and measures of social distancing and general hygiene.

5. Violation of the right to work

Public sector employees in Yemen constitute 1.2 million people. Of these, one million people work in institutions in northern Yemen, where the Houthis rule by force de facto. Since the first year, the Houthis have been in Sanaa and the provinces they controlled. Compulsory cultural courses were imposed on these employees, the subject of which was the group's faith and its religious authority, Hussein al-Houthi. The Houthis did not stop there, as the Supreme Political Council of the unrecognized Houthi government issued in November 2022 a code of professional conduct. It is a common document in most countries that expresses the rights and duties of the employee in government institutions and defines the nature of the relationship between the employee and his superiors. This document contradicts the Yemeni constitution, the Civil Service Law, and its executive regulations. This Code consists of 36 pages and requires public sector employees to pledge allegiance to Abdul-Malik al-Houthi⁵⁰. According to the Code, 'each employee will sign a formal pledge to abide by the requirements of the Code, and a copy will be kept in the employee's file⁵¹.' Also, according to the Code, the government employee in the governorates controlled by the militia is obligated to support the activities of the militia and to attend to the activities of Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the militia.

Since the Houthis, a group that performs state functions in the areas under its control, had to respect international and regional standards in preparing these codes, and with a large segment of public sector employees in northern Yemen rejecting this code, the militia imposed it by force and threatened anyone who refused to recognize it with expulsion or replacement. We also find that the code does not include a mention of gender and addresses its target audience in the plural form, except for the text on the need to abide by the rules of chastity during work⁵². More than the above, the code specifies only the public employee duties; while ignoring his rights, especially those represented in the rewarding monthly salary, bonuses,

⁵⁰ Yemenis slam 'unjust' Houthi code of conduct for govt workers, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2215026/middle-east>

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Between the Lines: Understanding the Houthi Employment Code of Conduct, <https://bit.ly/3yc342L>

promotions, retirement pension, health insurance, and other rights that guarantee him an affordable life⁵³.

6. Violation of the right to health

According to the United Nations Population Fund evaluation, 20.3 million Yemenis do not have basic health services, which indicates the extent of the decline in health services in Yemen, especially for women. About 80% of the health facilities that provide maternity and childhood services are closed. Women in northern Yemen, where the Houthis rule by force of arms, are still denied access to most health care services, including reproductive care services, with the prohibition of contraceptives at the end of 2019 in some health facilities before suspending these methods in four areas in the governorates of Saada, which deprived the population of reproductive health services and advice on family planning methods. In June 2020⁵⁴, these methods were banned in government health facilities, private clinics, and pharmacies in the Saada governorate. These practices forced the World Health Organization to suspend its activities in northern Yemen⁵⁵.

In a related context, the Houthi militia used the judicial guard to control all private hospitals in the areas under the control of the militia, the most recent of which was the control of the Yemen Heart Center on February 17, 2023. The judicial guard sent armed men to the center to seize it under the pretext that some of the donors to the center were from the militia's political opponents who support the Presidential Council, without being bound by any judicial procedures, whether by the Public Prosecution or by the court. On February 5, 2023, the militia appointed a judicial guard over Al-Jabali Eye Hospital in Ibb Governorate in preparation for its confiscation. The militia has also expanded the use of expired medical drugs in its hospitals. Maat has documented the death of 19 children between the ages of three and about thirteen who had leukemia at Kuwait Hospital in Sana'a after distributing a dose of expired chemical medicine⁵⁶.

Maat has noticed that the Ministry of Health in the government run by the Houthis has tried to evade its responsibility by refusing to issue a death certificate causing the death in some cases; no investigation has been opened in this incident that led to the death of these children⁵⁷; that naturally affected the health sector in Yemen. At the end of 2021, an estimated 20.1 million people, or nearly 70% of the total population in the country, lacked access to basic healthcare, and an estimated 3 million people were displaced due to the lack of access to healthcare.

⁵³ نص مدونة السلوك الوظيفي واخلاقيات العمل العام، على الرابط التالي:

https://www.saba.ye//storage/files/blog/1667842489_pTyQTA.pdf

⁵⁴ "Moments of Hell!", <https://mwatana.org/en/undermine-women/>

⁵⁵ لماذا علقت الصحة العالمية نشاطاتها في مناطق الحوثيين؟، <https://bit.ly/3ZXOLKZ>

⁵⁶ Calls for international probe into deaths of 18 children with leukemia in Houthi-held Sanaa,

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2181646/middle-east>

⁵⁷ مستشفى الكويت في اليمن: غضب بعد وفاة عشرات الأطفال بسبب "أدوية فاسدة"، بي بي سي عربي، على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-63279597>

7. Violation of the right to education

The United Nations Children and Motherhood Organization indicates that out of 10.6 million students in Yemen of school age, there are 5.8 million whose education was disrupted, including 2.5 million girls⁵⁸; that was caused by several factors, including; the closure that followed the spread of the Corona epidemic in Yemen, and the increase in tuition fees imposed by the Ministry of Education of the Houthi militia, which increased by about 33%, which led to children dropping out of education due to their limited ability to cover education expenses⁵⁹.

Using educational facilities for military purposes by all parties led to the exit of these educational facilities from work. Attacks on schools also exacerbated the getting out of some children from the educational process. The number of attacks on schools from 2018 to the end of 2022 reached about 142 schools that were in operation. The lack of teachers led to a further deterioration of education in northern Yemen, as the Teachers Syndicate warned that about 60% of the total workers in the educational sector had not received their salaries regularly for four years; 924 educators were dismissed from their jobs and replaced with militia figures. These arbitrary practices against laborers in Yemen have led many to look for other jobs, such as cleaners or porters, but their wages remain low and do not cover their daily expenses.

The Ministry of Education in northern Yemen administers an education system for a population four times the size of that in the south⁶⁰. However, in north Yemen, the curricula have undergone a radical change in a way that perpetuates sectarianism. Maat reviewed reports confirming that the ministry replaced the national anthems with what is known as “Zawamel”, a culture that follows the Houthi group and perpetuates violence against others of other sects. It also strengthened the presence of the group's leaders in the school curricula. These practices prompted some parents in the north to stop sending their children to schools.

Teachers in militia-controlled areas also faced killings, assassinations, and kidnappings. According to the Teachers Syndicate, 1,580 teachers and educators were killed in the Houthi-controlled areas from October 24, 2014, to December 30, 2021. The Houthi militia also practiced arbitrary arrest of teachers and educators, and many arbitrarily detained teachers reached about 1,173 teachers. In specific incidents, on January 20, 2021, local sources reported that an armed group had kidnapped eight teachers and educational staff and detained them in a school in Al-Ta'iziyah district, Taiz governorate.

⁵⁸ التعليم، يونيسيف اليمن، على الرابط التالي: <https://uni.cf/3VSikeX>

⁵⁹ Yemen, education system at risk due to conflict, Interco's, <https://bit.ly/3B7HG0i>

⁶⁰ CONFLICT AND COHERENCE, Page 10, <https://bit.ly/3UwPiQW>

Section III: Violations against the Most Vulnerable Groups

The vulnerable, marginalized and most vulnerable groups in the armed conflict in Yemen were subjected to disproportionate violations by the Houthi militia, the impact of the conflict was particularly wide on women, children, minorities, and migrants who were subjected to various forms of abuse, especially in Houthi-controlled areas, these violations contradict the protection granted to these groups under the humanitarian international law.

1. Women

The Fourth Geneva Convention includes a special situation for women, as Article 27 states that “women must be protected in particular against any assault on their honor, especially rape, forced prostitution, or desecration of their sanctity. Nevertheless, women in areas under the control of the Houthis faced grave violations, including sexual violence, restrictions on their right in motion and work.

1.1. Sexual violence and rape

Women in northern Yemen, especially those with political and social roles, faced sexual violence by the prison supervisors of the Houthi militia. Sexual violence was widely used during the years of conflict and as a tool to coerce confessions⁶¹. The former director of the Criminal Investigation Department, Ali Sultan Saleh Zabin, used sexual violence as a tool of torture, which subjected him to Security Council sanctions under Resolution 2564 of 2021. Some girls were also subjected to sexual violence in the National Security Department of Al-Saleh Prison in Taiz, which is a prison run by the Houthi militia⁶².

Maat reviewed reports confirming that about 71 women in militia prisons were subjected to rape and impotence, as a result of their detention on the basis of their political affiliation that differs from the Houthi ideology, until the end of 2020, and the Houthis were given a justification for that in what is called the cleansing jihad, which is veiled rape on the approach of Da’esh, which committed the crime in the past⁶³, as the Houthis affiliated with the Hashemite dynasty, in whom they see superiority and ethnic purity, rape the victim, and according to their view, this gives women the advantage of sin-cleansing. These tasks are facilitated against women detained in Sana'a by the so-called "Zeinabiyat" agency⁶⁴.

It is a female-led intelligence agency, established by the director of the Criminal Investigation Agency in Sana’a, Sultan Zabin. The responsibilities of this agency include searching women and homes, indoctrinating women with the Hashemite Houthi faith,

⁶¹ State of World Population 2022, United Nations Population Fund, p. 8, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/41Y7kR2>

⁶² Strengthening responses to conflict-related sexual violence against boys deprived of their liberty in situations of armed conflict, <https://bit.ly/3F0DqBD>

⁶³ "Yemeni Women on the Edge of the Abyss", a new report by the Maat Foundation on the occasion of International Women's Day, <https://bit.ly/3ZT2R0e>

⁶⁴ Ibid

maintaining order in women's prisons, and facilitating what is called the purification jihad against women who refuse to submit to the instructions of the Criminal Investigation Agency⁶⁵.

Women who are "marginalized" have also been particularly subjected to rape and other sexual abuse due to the general impunity for their attackers due to their status as second-class groups in Yemeni society. According to the US State Department report on the situation of human rights in Yemen 2021, "the Muhamasheen continue to be the target of severe sexual violence." Sexual rape in armed conflict is contrary to the Rome Statute. Security Council Resolution No. 2426 of 2022 attributed the description of the Houthis as terrorists to, inter alia, the Houthis' use of sexual violence against politically active women⁶⁶.

1.2 Restrictions on the right to movement

The Houthi militia restricted the right of women in their areas of control to movement. The restrictions imposed on Yemeni women included prohibiting the movement of Yemeni women internally between Yemeni governorates without a male guardian, and externally to other countries, or at least an estimate of providing written consent allowing them to travel⁶⁷. In response to the Houthi circular, on September 21, 2021, a tribal circular was issued in the Bani Hashish district in Sana'a, preventing women from using transportation without a male guardian. These restrictions prevented women, especially those working in humanitarian organizations, from traveling and performing their work⁶⁸, and also prevented some women from completing their university studies abroad. For example, Abeer Al-Maqtari, a 21-year-old Yemeni girl, won a scholarship in Cairo. However, the Sana'a airport authorities refused to allow her to travel to Cairo to complete her studies⁶⁹.

Reports reviewed by Maat also alerted that in August 2022, the Land Transport Regulatory Authority affiliated with the Houthi militia issued a verbal directive stipulating that women should not be allowed to travel without the escort of a Mahram within the governorates controlled by the militia to areas under the control of the Presidential Leadership Council. Based on this, car rental agencies refused to rent vehicles to women without a Mahram to drive from Sana'a to Aden. This decision faced structural obstacles in implementation, given that some women had their husbands killed during the battles, while some women needed to go out while their husbands were working.

1.3 Restrictions on women's right to work

The right to work is guaranteed under a wide range of agreements ratified by Yemen. The Houthi militia reported that these agreements apply to its administration, which means

⁶⁵ A previously mentioned source, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3dDKkjp>

⁶⁶ Resolution 2624 (2022), <https://bit.ly/41UYzXT>

⁶⁷ Yemen's Houthis tighten restrictions on women, <https://bit.ly/3JqrPOY>

⁶⁸ The Weights of War on Yemen's Roads, Yemen Center for Strategic Studies, <https://bit.ly/41ZicOA>

⁶⁹ The Houthis tighten restrictions on women's rights in Yemen, France 24, <https://bit.ly/3T7x9Kj>

commitment to them. However, the Houthi militia violated these obligations. For example, in September 2021, the militia issued circular banning women from working in relief organizations in Hajjah governorate⁷⁰. On January 23, 2021, gunmen affiliated with the militia forced a restaurant manager to pledge in writing that the restaurant “will not employ women in any of the restaurant branches.” As a result, thirty women lost their jobs.

The Houthis, especially the social control wing in Sana'a, launched a campaign to prevent women from working in restaurants. This campaign was led by what is known as directing this wing to ban women from working in restaurants and hotels, claiming that this contradicts the faith identity. This campaign coincided with incitement measures against women working in Sana'a and its suburbs, and despite what was reported by Houthis officials that these actions are individual, local residents confirmed that the militiamen carried out this campaign in different periods and since the end of 2020 and in the first two months of 2021. These campaigns included a large-scale inspection of restaurants, hotels and parks to ensure the implementation of the decision. It is expected that such trends will exacerbate the humanitarian and economic conditions of a wide range of families who have lost their breadwinners, in light of the increasing number of deaths due to the continuation of the current conflict in Yemen⁷¹.

The Houthis' decision comes within the framework of their belief in the prohibition of mixing between men and women in general, which was explained by a number of restaurant owners who were targeted by the campaign of the Social Control Group in Sana'a, where these owners said that the group had given them instructions to exclude any women and not to work in restaurants to combat mixing⁷². As a result, Yemen was excluded from the classification of the Gender Equality Index for 2022, as the index excluded 12 countries, including Yemen, due to the lack of basic standards for women's rights.⁷³

2. Children

Children have faced various forms of harmful practices and violations since the beginning of the conflict, especially in areas under the control of the Houthis. The militia has never kept the promises made to United Nations bodies regarding children, and continued to recruit children and put children in the worst forms of labor, encouraging early marriage in Houthi-controlled areas.

2.1 Children Recruitment

⁷⁰ Yemen: Huthis ‘suffocating’ women with requirement for male guardians, <https://bit.ly/3JBpbWV>

⁷¹ Concern in Sana’a over restrictions on women working outside the home, Independent Arabia, February 5, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3bloHTF>

⁷² Yemeni coup plotters prevent women from working in an arbitrary campaign, Asharq Al-Awsat, February 4, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3qsCWuc>

⁷³ Global Gender Gap Report 2022, page 8, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf

On April 18, 2022, the Houthis signed an action plan with the United Nations, represented by the Assistant Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to stop the recruitment of children, the action plan gives the Houthis about 6 months to “identify all children under the age of 18 recruits,” to release them and reintegrate them into society. The implementation of this plan remained in doubt, especially after the Houthis broke their previous promises regarding preventing and ending children recruitment⁷⁴, in light of Maat and local right-wing organizations continuing to document cases of child recruitment after the militia signed the action plan with the United Nations.

It is worth noting that there is a discrepancy in the estimates related to the actual numbers of children recruited by the Houthi militia. According to the Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, Marwan Noman, the Houthis recruited about 35000 children, of whom 17% are under the age of 11, from September 2014 to September 2021, among this number are more than 6,700 children who are active in the fighting fronts, more than 2,300 of whom were killed in battles between the Houthis and the legitimately recognized government forces⁷⁵. While (figure nine), more than 23,000 children are active at checkpoints and guard work in Houthi-controlled areas. While local organizations estimate that the Houthis are recruiting 21,075 children until February 2023, while we believe that the actual numbers are higher than that, given that summer schools organized by the Houthis for children are often ignored in documentation.

⁷⁴ New Action Plan to Strengthen the Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Yemen Signed with the Houthis, Children and armed conflict, <https://bit.ly/3MSo8Ap>

⁷⁵ Government official: The Houthi group recruited 35,000 children and forced them into war, Al-Khobar Post, September 24, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3v66CmC>

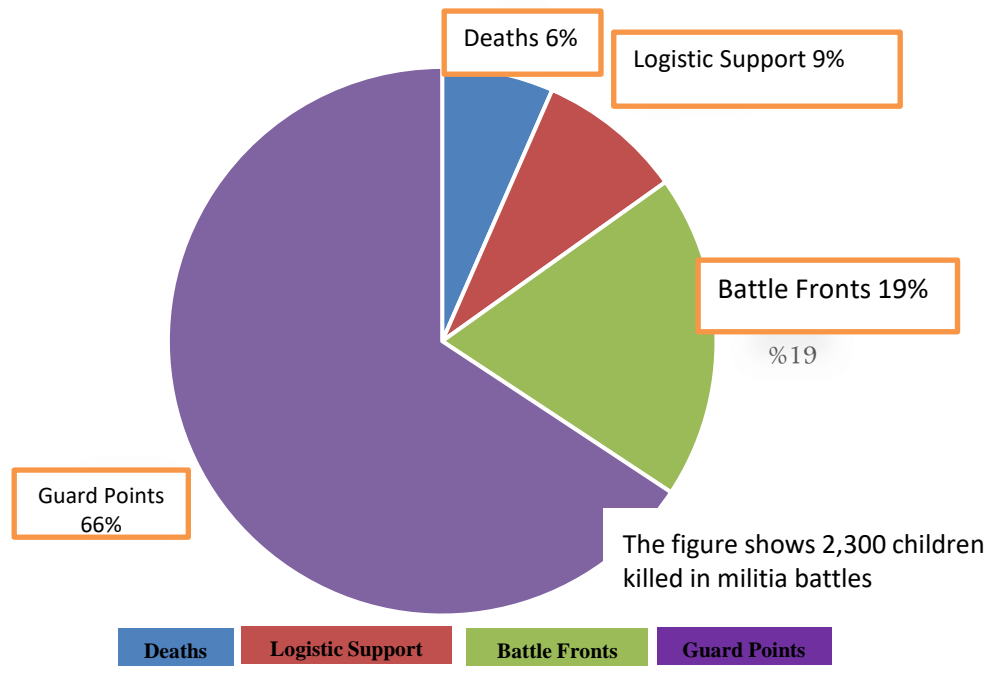


Figure 9 children recruited in various tasks

According to the previous figure, it is clear that the Houthis rely more on children at guard points, with a rate of 66% of the total number of children recruited by them, and then the battle fronts with a rate of 19%, this illustrates the strategic importance that the Houthis attach to these children, as about 30,000 children have been thrown into checkpoints, guards, and combat fronts. Despite the Houthis' pledge to end the recruitment of children in the action plan signed with the United Nations, they are still continuing child recruitment operations. Maat reviewed videos confirming the continuation of these practices even after the Houthis signed the action plan with the representative of the Secretary-General. For example, in February 2023, the militia recruited 45 children under the age of 15 and forced them to undergo a training program in a camp in the northwest of Sana'a governorate. In the details of this incident, the Houthi group held a sectarian course for the abducted children, describing it as a "cultural course" for a week, then attached them to a direct combat course in the recruitment camp that lasted 15 days, before distributing them as escorts to field military leaders in the same group.

A video clip circulating on social media also shows the leader of the militia, "Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti ", visiting a summer camp in Dhamar governorate. By examining the video, we find that dozens of children are wearing military uniforms and chanting expressions of loyalty to the militia leader, Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi. It was stated by Houthi leaders that they do not see anything wrong with recruiting children, given that children from 10 to 12 years old are considered men.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict states that armed groups are not entitled to use children under the age of 18 in any case and calls on states to criminally punish such practices. The parties to the conflict that recruit and use children are added by the Secretary-General to the list of shame issued annually to the parties responsible for grave violations against children during the conflict. Article 45 of the Yemeni Child Rights Act of 2000 prohibits the use of children in armed conflicts, and calls for an end to the recruitment of any person under the age of 18, while children recruitment contravenes Rule 136 of Customary Humanitarian Law. Maat would also like to clarify that the allegations of the Houthi militia regarding the voluntary enlistment of children by the families of children are not correct, but the economic conditions may push some families to allow their children to join the militias to increase the family's income and obtain the specified food rations from the aid. According to a head of a family and his testimony, the delay in sending his children to "summer camps" will deprive the family of food rations⁷⁶. In some cases, children also join the militia on their own to avoid remaining in a vicious circle of poverty.

2.2 Worst forms of child labor

Children are involved in the worst forms of child labor in Yemen, and Maat has noticed that these children are being put into what is known as baggage servitude, where children are sold, transferred and bequeathed as property in the governorates of Hodeidah, Mahut and Hajjah, which are under the control of the Houthi militia⁷⁷. These children are often subjected to serious risks, including extrajudicial killing. In July 2021, a ten-year-old child was subjected while working and was still between life and death in the hospital⁷⁸. The Houthis' placing children in the worst forms of labor contradicts SDG 7 and SDG 8, and the basic labor organization conventions, including the International Labor Organization Convention No. 138 of 1973 regarding the minimum age for employment and the International Labor Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and immediate actions to eliminate them for 1999.

3.2 Marriage of minors

Young married girls face many risks related to dropping out of early education⁷⁹. About 4 million girls under the age of 15 are married in Yemen, and about 1.5 million children are married before the age of 18⁸⁰. In general, the United Nations Children's Fund estimates that more than

⁷⁶ IN YEMEN, CHILD SOLDIERING CONTINUES DESPITE HOUTHİ PROMISE, Associated Press, <https://bit.ly/3ILZvVP>

⁷⁷ Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports 2019, US Department of Labor, Page 1239, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2020/2020_TDA_BigBook_Online_optimized.pdf

⁷⁸ The Houthis displace 25,000 children, Asharq Al-Awsat, July 21, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3H9pgg0>

⁷⁹ The Status of Yemeni Women: From Ambition to Achieving Opportunities, World Bank, p. 7, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/36qRiXy>

⁸⁰ Country Profile of Phase I: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Program to End Child Marriage, Page 2, <https://www.unicef.org/media/88851/file/Child-marriage-Yemen-profile-2019.pdf>

72% of girls in Yemen get married while they are still children (less than 18 years old)⁸¹. Early marriage contributes to high dropout rates from education, where it is very difficult for a married girl to complete her education, as social norms and stereotypes in Yemen push husbands to keep their wives at home and limit their life tasks to educating children and domestic roles, which are acceptable practices, especially in areas under the control of the Houthis.

During the period from June 2019 to June 2021, it was estimated that about 105 cases of forced and early marriage occurred⁸², and the reasons for engaging girls in these practices harmful to their health varied, at the forefront of these reasons is the parents' fear of sending their daughters to the various combat fronts, this is in parallel with the need and the economic destitution of many families who are forced to marry off their daughters at an early age. For example, the case of a Yemeni father marrying his eight-year-old daughter for 200,000 Yemeni riyals with an officially documented contract in Houthi-controlled areas sparked anger in Yemen, which eventually led to the cancellation of marriage procedures, and despite the cancellation of marriage, there are many cases that are still rampant, especially in rural areas in northern Yemen⁸³, other testimonies indicated that the Houthis often force families to marry off their daughters to the group's fighters or leadership⁸⁴.

3. Minorities

UN agencies estimate the number of minorities in Yemen at about 10% of the total population⁸⁵, including religious minorities, the Muhamasheen, and blacks⁸⁶. In this part of the report, we sought those Muhamasheen who constitute the largest minority and are called verbally like “servants.” This group has faced racial discrimination and stigmatization in northern Yemen. They also faced other violations, including denial of education and employment. They were also recruited in the framework of what is known as the Bilal Descendants Project.

3.1 Deprivation of education

Muhamasheen children face significant social and economic obstacles to education, and may leave school early due to abuse and discrimination at school⁸⁷. It is estimated that 40% of Muhamasheen women have never joined schools. According to the head of the Muhamasheen Union, university students from the Muhamasheen group also faced challenges in completing

⁸¹ A Child Marriage Story “I was young, I was easily deceived”, United Nations Population Fund, <https://bit.ly/35b5TFH>

⁸² Forced marriage is a Houthi phenomenon that haunts Ibb and the areas under the group's control, the Middle East, reference previously mentioned

⁸³ In Marriage of Underage Girls, the Hero is the Victim, Arab Mandates, July 2021, <https://bit.ly/3H6KEH7>

⁸⁴ Yemen's Houthi-controlled areas see dramatic rise in child marriages. Al-Arabiya. <https://bit.ly/3H6AK3A>

⁸⁵ UNITED NATIONS YEMEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2022 – 2024, Page 9, <https://bit.ly/3ZITLsS>

⁸⁶ TRIBES IN YEMEN An introduction to the tribal system, <https://bit.ly/3ydlL64>

⁸⁷ YEMEN COUNTRY REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, Page 2, <https://uni.cf/3KStnm1>

their studies because of their miserable conditions, as they study by candlelight, which prompts some high school students from the Muhamasheen class to return again to work in the streets in shoe weaving, general hygiene, and not joining universities. These practices contradict the UNESCO Convention on Combating Discrimination in the Field of Education, which is supposed to apply its provisions even in times of armed conflict.

3.2 Employment

Muhamasheen are still working in less prestigious jobs in northern Yemen, and they receive low wages that make them complain about the standard of living and live in poverty, and they are still working, according to the report of the US State Department for Human Rights, in sweeping streets, cleaning and sewing shoes. The high rate of illiteracy among them contributed to their lack of prestigious jobs, as 70% of them are unable to read and write. Their distance from learning was linked to their fear of integrating into a society in which they were subjected to stigmatization⁸⁸. Besides, most of the graduates were unable to find a job anywhere but in the “City Improvement and Cleaning Fund”; a job they could have had without education, with a daily wage or a contract.

3.3 Recruitment “Bilal Descendants”

Earlier, the leader of the Houthi militia, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, announced the integration of the Muhamasheen into Yemeni society and called them "Bilal Descendants". However, this project, according to independent estimates, was aimed at recruiting this group, and according to the head of the Union of Muhamasheen in Yemen, the Houthis recruited more than 800 children from this group. The families of these Muhamasheen children, who refused to send their sons for recruitment, faced extrajudicial killing. For example, on July 4, 2020, a Houthi gunman with his nickname "Abu Ali" killed three from one family and injured a fourth in Qafalah district in Amran governorate after a dispute raged between them, after the family refused to send their children to the militia⁸⁹.

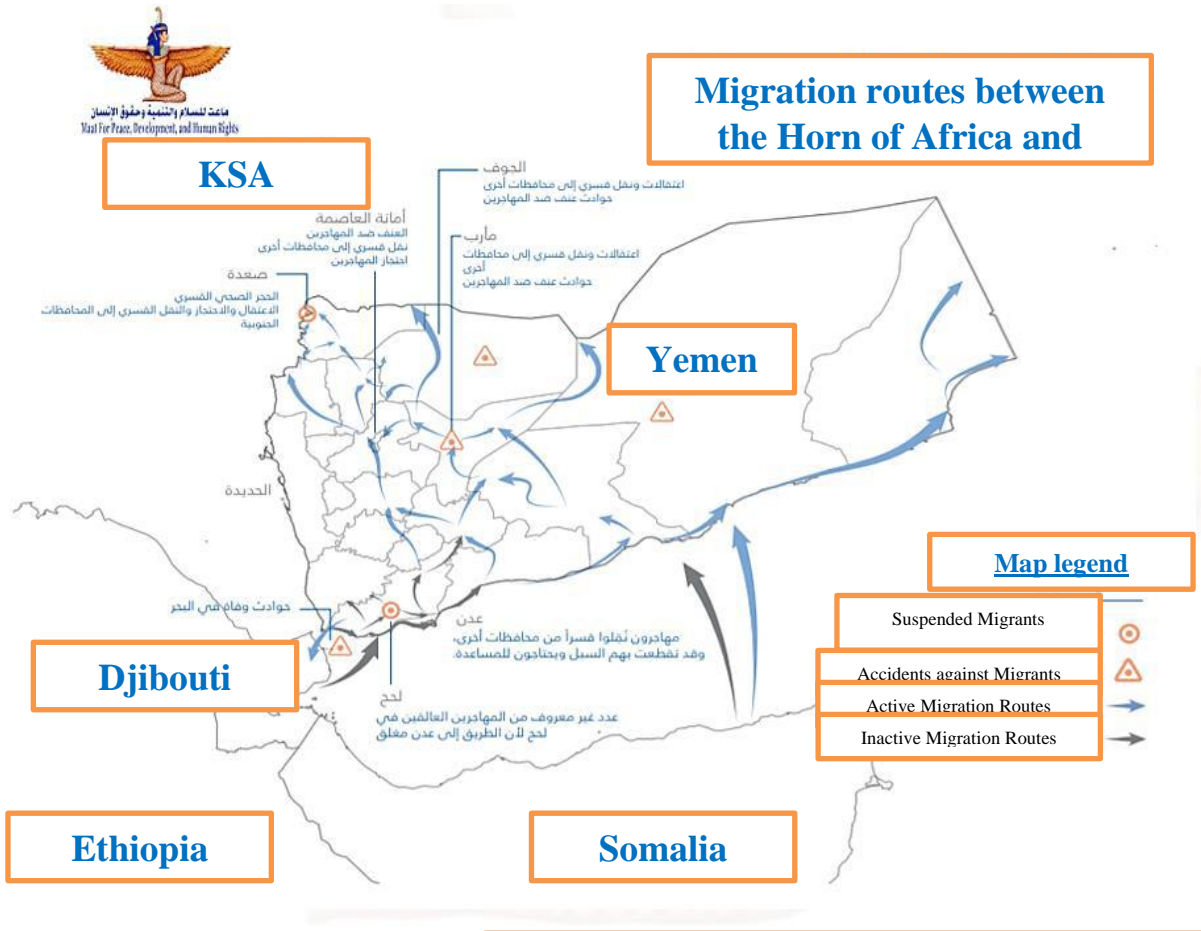
4. Migrants

In 2022, Yemen hosted, according to the displacement tracking matrix of the International Organization for Migration, about 73,000 migrants, of whom Ethiopian migrants constitute about 98% of the total number of migrants, and the rest are from Somalia and Eritrea. Yemen is the first transit country for migrants, especially African migrants from the Horn of Africa, given the proximity of the countries of origin of these migrants to the coasts of Yemen, and as their gateway to the Arab Gulf states or Europe. These migrants arrive mostly on large boats, and sometimes they use smuggling ships for a fee which sometimes reaches \$500 for each migrant, and whoever survives among these migrants is the one who reaches the Yemeni coasts safely,

⁸⁸ The Muhamasheen in Yemen: Alienation at the Bottom of the Heap, <https://bit.ly/3L9j65c>

⁸⁹ A Houthi supervisor kills 3 of Bilal's "grandchildren" because they refused to go to fight, and the women take revenge by killing the supervisor and the families of his companions, Al-Masdar Online, <https://almasdaronline.com/articles/197300>

because many migrants are subjected to beatings, and sometimes smuggling networks force them to leave the ship or boat at great distances from the coast for fear that the ships will be detained by border management, so many victims drown as they cannot swim long distances.



Source: International Organization for Migration

The Houthi militia made the African migrants face bad options, either exploiting them in hostilities against government forces or paying exit fees from detention centers, or forcible deportation to the southern governorates under the internationally recognized Yemeni government. These migrants were subjected to extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detention. Migrants are subjected to a wide range of risks that contradict the protection they are guaranteed under international law, international refugee law and other international norms, and their right to life is still fraught with grave dangers.

4.1 Extrajudicial killing

In 2021 and 2022 alone, about 1,065 migrants were killed or injured in northern Yemen, where the Houthis rule, including about 1000 migrants in 2022 alone who were killed and

injured at the border⁹⁰. In specific incidents, gunmen affiliated with the Houthi militia deliberately killed migrants in unofficial detention centers. For example, on March 7, 2021, the security forces of the Houthi group fired projectiles or bombs at a detention center for migrants affiliated with the Migration and Nationality Department in Sana'a governorate, which caused a fire to break out in the center, resulting in the death of more than 65 migrants, most of whom were of Ethiopian nationality, and the injury of 200 others, some of them are still in very critical condition⁹¹, while Maat agrees with what the International Organization for Migration agreed on, which stated that the death toll may be much higher.

Background on the incident

550 Ethiopian migrants, some of whom were from Somalia and Eritrea, were placed in a hangar⁹² or a facility that was very crowded with migrants. The issue did not stop at overcrowding, but the extremely bad conditions included preventing the migrants inside the facility from getting sleeping bags, and they only received food at separate times and in small quantities, they did not receive adequate amounts of water and were subjected to insults, beatings and threats from the detention center guards. The previous deplorable conditions prompted the migrants to organize a hunger strike⁹³.

Early on March 7, 2021, according to the testimonies of some of the detained migrants, which were monitored by Maat, some of the migrants refused to eat breakfast. At 1:00 pm, the guards returned with lunch, but the detainees continued to refuse food. After the center guards identified the protest organizers, they took them out of the hangar, and beat them with wooden sticks and their firearms. In response, the detainees threw dishes and hit a security guard in the face, who was clearly wounded. The guards then rounded up the migrants nearby and locked them in the hangar. Minutes later, the detained migrants were surprised by security forces dressed in black, green and gray uniforms, armed with weapons and other military equipment. One of the aforementioned security personnel climbed onto the roof of the hangar, which had some openings for ventilation, and fired two projectiles. The migrants said that the first shell made the eyes of the migrants in the hangar shed tears. The second one, which the migrants called a "bomb", exploded. This bomb caused a loud noise in the center and started a fire in all its corners⁹⁴.

On March 17, 2021, the Houthis admitted the responsibility of their security forces for the fire in the detention center for migrants, and stated that 11 soldiers from the riot control

⁹⁰ The International Organization for Migration warns: Increase in human rights violations against migrants in Yemen in light of the high number of immigrants, <https://bit.ly/3T2XeKz>

⁹¹ The African community in Yemen mourns the funeral of 44 migrants who were burned to death in Sanaa, The Independent Arabia, March 14, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3xGNom2>

⁹² A large, tall, arched building

⁹³ Yemen: Dozens Killed in Migrant Detention Center Fire, Human Rights Watch, March 16, 2021, available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2UliEZt>

⁹⁴ A previously mentioned source, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2UliEZt>

and passport departments were responsible for burning 45 migrants and injuring 170 others, these numbers later turned out to be much higher, and the militia said that the bombs used to start the fire are CS smoke bombs. The Houthis said that the soldiers were detained until they were brought to trial, and stated that an independent investigation had been opened into the incident. According to the testimonies of the soldiers, they said that they did not command their superiors to launch the bombs, but as of writing this report, we did not know the final results of this investigation⁹⁵. Maat believes that the Houthis' recognition of the crime of the migrant detention center in Sana'a, which is a crime against humanity, cannot absolve them from responsibility, and a comprehensive and independent investigation must be opened in cooperation with the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, any investigation must summon those who gave orders to the soldiers by firing missiles and gunfire right into the hangar of detention, as the impunity for this crime will make it a recurring pattern, like all the violations practiced by the militia.

On April 16, 2020, Maat documented the detention of thousands of Ethiopian migrants by armed elements affiliated with the Houthis in the village of al-Ghar in Saada governorate, a village that harbors illegal migrants. The armed elements asked the migrants to ride in small transport vehicles and took them to the Saudi borders, and fired live bullets at two people who tried to flee, who died on the spot⁹⁶.

According to the testimonies of migrants who were on board the fifty small transport vehicles, forty people were killed due to the Houthis firing mortar shells and live bullets at the migrants on the borders with Saudi Arabia. The Houthis' inhumane treatment of migrants contradicts the protection guaranteed to them in international law and all international norms, and since the Houthis are an active group that exercises functions similar to those of the state, they are required to comply with international law. Maat believes that the continuation of Houthis to evade these obligations, especially with regard to migrants, may lead to heavy losses in the lives of these migrants⁹⁷.

4.2 Arbitrary Detention

International human rights law prohibits the arbitrary detention or arrest of migrants, including those who enter irregularly, and migrants should not be subjected to arbitrary detention or other forms of coercion in inappropriate conditions. According to the Special

⁹⁵ Finally.. The Houthi militia admits the events of the "Sana'a massacre", Sky News Arabia, March 22, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3z0t5jC>

⁹⁶ Yemen: Houthi Kill, Expel Ethiopian Migrants, Human Rights Watch, August 13, 2021, available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3hJApui>

⁹⁷ A previously mentioned source, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3hJApui>

Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants “Illegal entry or stay should not be considered criminal offenses, and illegal migrants⁹⁸ should not be considered criminals⁹⁸.”

However, in the aftermath of the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and the announcement by the Houthi group that the first infection with the virus was due to a Somali migrant, the group launched massive campaigns in Sana'a and other governorates under its control, and put them in inhumane detention centers that lack the basics of survival, where there were small amounts of food and unclean water, and the bedrooms did not have openings for ventilation. The International Organization for Migration estimated the number of detained migrants in Sana'a only at more than 3,000 migrants until September 2020, living in the darkest conditions⁹⁹.

Among the previous figures, the Houthi militia arbitrarily detained about 900 migrants inside the detention center of the Migration, Passports and Nationality Authority in Sana'a before the fire broke out, which claimed the lives of dozens of migrants, knowing that the number of detainees inside the facility exceeds its capacity by about three times¹⁰⁰. These migrants are kept in detention until they pay the exit fees, which often exceed 500 dollars. The majority of migrants are unable to pay these exorbitant fees, and they are sometimes bargained in order to engage in fighting with the Houthis against the Yemeni government and the Arab coalition to support the legitimacy in Yemen, in exchange for paying exit fees and obtaining additional amounts. As for those who refuse, they remain in the places designated for the detention of migrants, which are hangars or facilities that are not suitable for holding people, where there is severe crowding, lack of lighting and ventilation, which facilitates the spread of infectious diseases such as smallpox, scabies and other diseases.

Reparation for the harm of these migrants is still elusive, as the courts, even in the event of the migrants' access, lack for interpretation services or legal assistance for migrants, which made migrants up for grabs. Some of them had accepted the current situation in northern Yemen and worked as cleaners and in car workshops, some of them had succeeded in attracting the militia, some of them had left for the border wanting to go to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and others preferred to return again to their countries of origin.

4.3 Forced Deportation

International human rights law, international refugee law and customary international law prohibit the forced return of migrants and refugees to their countries of origin, and all international covenants require protection for migrants even if they entered the country of

⁹⁸ Detained and stripped of their humanity, “A report on human rights violations against migrants in Libya, United Nations Support Mission in Libya, p. 14, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3r9Y75W>

⁹⁹ A previously mentioned source, on the following link: <https://bit.ly/3xP2OEM>

¹⁰⁰ “International Migration”: The conditions of detention of migrants in Yemen are “inhumane,” Sky News Arabia, March 15, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3riQ5rB>

transit or destination illegally, but the Houthi militia did not abide by the principle of non-refoulement. In April 2021, the anti-riot forces of the Houthi terrorist group in Sana'a broke up a sit-in for hundreds of African migrants who were sitting in front of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Sana'a. As a result of dispersal, 2 migrants were killed and hundreds were injured, including more than 55 women, as a result of the use of live bullets, in addition to the looting of their belongings and personal supplies such as mobile phones and the money they had, while others were deported to the governorates of Taiz, Lahj and Dhamar¹⁰¹. Although the right to freedom of peaceful assembly is guaranteed to every human being, it cannot be a pretext for the forced deportation of migrants, as on April 3, 2021, the Houthi group began the forcible transfer of hundreds of African migrants hours after organizing a peaceful assembly in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Sana'a, who gathered to demand an international investigation into the Holocaust they were subjected to in March 2021, where the number of migrants who were forcibly transferred by the Houthi group to other areas outside Sana'a reached more than 500, including 210 males, and 200 children and women, all of them Ethiopians, in addition to 45 Somalis migrants, including women and children, on board of medium-sized Denat trucks, arriving in Dhamar governorate¹⁰². In a related context, the migrants who were forcibly transferred were forced to write pledges not to return to Sana'a, and then they were taken towards Taiz governorate¹⁰³.

Most of the time, the forced deportation took place without informing the organizations concerned with migrants in Yemen, such as the International Organization for Migration or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Among the migrants who were deported were a wide range of wounded people who were injured in the dispersal of the sit-in in front of the headquarters of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who were forced by the security forces of the Houthi group to get off the trucks and walk towards the areas of control of the internationally recognized Yemeni government¹⁰⁴.

According to lawyer Arafat Jibril Bakr, the deported migrants were forcibly moved to some uninhabited areas that lack the basic necessities of life, as they are areas devoid of water or food. With the announcement of the first infection with the Corona pandemic in Yemen, and attributing it to a Somali migrant, the Houthi group began to transfer more than 2,000 migrants to the south, where the internationally recognized Yemeni government controls areas, and the deportations and forced transfer of migrants to the south come in the context of the Houthi group's disavowal of all obligations imposed under international law with regard to migrants¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰¹ Deportation of African migrants from Sana'a, Street, April 4, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3elaWW7>

¹⁰² Deportation, killings and arrests.. Al-Houthi abuses African migrants, Al-Ain Al-Akhbariya, April 3, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2U6ZdDK>

¹⁰³ Deportation of African Migrants from Sana'a, Street, April 4, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3kk8Pph>

¹⁰⁴ Same op

¹⁰⁵ The United Nations: An increase in the number of detained African migrants in Houthi prisons in Sana'a, the capital, September 8, 2021, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/36EGJwO>

Outcomes and Recommendations

The main problem in Yemen in particular is that the armed group "Houthi militia", which overturned all decisions to establish democratic rule and peaceful transfer of power, such as the results of the National Dialogue Conference, the executive mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, and Security Council resolutions, has shirked its obligations under the law. International human rights law and international humanitarian law, and the promises made to respect international conventions on human rights are nothing but promises and have never been reflected in the human rights situation in northern Yemen. The widespread impunity, lack of accountability, and ignoring the opening of any serious investigations into all the arbitrary practices of the militia militants, encouraged the consolidation of a pattern of violations represented in the unscrupulous targeting of civilians, systematic torture, and the issuance of unfair death sentences through arbitrary and summary measures against journalists and Human rights defenders and civilians in general.

Based on the foregoing, Maat recommends the following:

First: Member States of the United Nations

- **Consider classifying the Houthis as a terrorist group in line with Security Council Resolution No. 2624 of 2022;**
- **Linking funding for programs that provide protection for the most vulnerable groups and humanitarian aid to the Houthi militia's respect for human rights;**
- **Pressure the Houthis to end the siege on the Yemeni governorate of Taiz, stop the ongoing violations in all the villages of the governorate, and ensure patients' access to health care centers;**
- **Pressure the Houthis to cancel the unfair death sentence issued by the Criminal Court in Sana'a against the four journalists, and ensure that these journalists communicate with their families and the lawyers assigned to defend them.**
- **Pressure the Houthis to cancel the circular prohibiting the movement of women to and from the Yemeni governorates and the travel abroad without a male guardian;**
- **Pressure the Houthis to abolish the discriminatory code of conduct that came into force in northern Yemen.**

Second: Security Council

- **International sanctions include the Minister of Interior, Abdul Karim Amir al-Din al-Houthi, in the unrecognized Houthi government, due to his direct responsibility for torturing thousands of detainees, including journalists, as well as his supervision of the recruitment of children.**
- **Refer the crimes of the Houthi terrorist group to the International Criminal Court and prosecute all those involved in acts that contravene basic human rights standards.**