



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Unchecked Violations: Repercussions of the Houthi's Use of Drones against Civilians in Yemen and Neighboring Countries

Edited by: Sherif Abdul-Hamid

Prepared by: Ali Mohammed

Introduction

The unprecedentedly growing use of drones poses grave risks to human rights, particularly the right to life. The indiscriminate attacks of these drones threaten civilians, who remain the target of these remotely programmed strikes. The use of these emerging technologies has become part of the strategies of non-state actors and armed groups, as well as traditional national states and armies that use these technologies in counter-terrorism.

The acquisition of drones, aka unmanned aircraft, by rebel groups, armed groups, and non-state actors has recently increased, mainly due to their low cost, which is estimated at 3000 dollars, in addition to the ease of obtaining them, as they are commercially available and anyone can purchase their components through digital marketing platforms. These aircraft also reduce the risk and sacrifice of the human element, as they do not require a crew onboard to carry out the operation.

In Yemen, the Houthis' use of these aircraft has become evident, particularly in the last three years. In 2015, the Houthis used aircraft for the first time; they used the DJI Phantom quadcopter to gather intelligence. By tracing the manufacture of this aircraft, we found that the aircraft is used for commercial purposes, manufactured in China, and available on e-commerce platforms such as Amazon with a price of 639 dollars.

The advanced manufacturing of drones depends on the ability to provide a wide variety of materials that are sourced from external sources, individually purchased and some are available online, including satellite compasses purchased from India-based companies, and electrical components mostly imported from Chinese companies. In many cases, the air defense systems find difficulty confronting this type of aircraft, particularly when using swarm tactic, as the attack is carried out through a group of ballistic missiles and drones, as in the case of the Houthis, to try to distract the air defense systems or if these drones are flying at a low altitude, even advanced air defense systems may not monitor these aircraft.

The Houthis expanded after that to obtain the technology of these aircraft, despite the ban imposed on the export of weapons to the Houthis under Security Council Resolution No. 2216, but they eventually succeeded in obtaining these aircraft by smuggling their components through the Sultanate of Oman, according to the Security Council's Panel of Experts, by Iranian personalities and companies such as the Behnam and Bagheri companies, two companies that are subject to sanctions by the United Nations and the European Union. Besides, the US Treasury Department placed the two companies on the sanctions list because of their activities that undermine stability in the Middle East and for providing weapons to the Houthis, or through a wide network of intermediaries, including companies Intermediate and personalities such as Persia Cargo for freight services, and "Gomez Air Services Co" for aviation services based in Hong Kong in southern China, two companies that are subject to sanctions by the United States of America for providing spare parts and logistics services to the Iranian company "Mahan Air". The export of drone technology, in general, contradicts Security Council Resolution "1540", which prohibits the delivery of armed aircraft technology to terrorist groups. The ban was also included in the Berlin Memorandum developed by the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which included working to prevent the arrival of drones to armed groups as a threat to national armies.

The growing use of these remotely-piloted aircraft has resulted in multiple negative impacts on basic human rights, including the supreme human right, the right to life, which is guaranteed under all international conventions and agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Drone attacks against civilians or groups protected under international humanitarian law amount to an extrajudicial killing, according to the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions.

This report focuses on the Houthi group's acquisition of drones and their use in violation of the right to life, particularly against civilians, and in threatening neighboring countries. The report also draws attention to the technology of these aircraft and the method of operation, as well as the

Houthis' arsenal of these aircraft and their local manufacture, in addition to Iran's smuggling of the components of these aircraft to the Houthis in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, the effects of drone attacks on civilians, and finally the reasons behind the Houthi escalation against the UAE and threatening the latter to use drones against.

First: Technology and method of work

Unmanned aircraft are robots or remotely-piloted flying vehicles, consisting of two parts; the chassis of the vehicle itself, and the control system, which has no place to accommodate the human element¹. The unmanned aircraft determines its location before takeoff also determines its target, and automatically returns to its location when communication is interrupted or the battery is weak. These aircraft use the well-known Global Positioning System (GPS). But this does not mean that the drone is completely self-oriented². The aircraft needs a pilot who sits in a guidance and control station on the ground and then controls aircraft remotely via satellite³. One of the most important components in drones is what is known as the "fuselage", and the propulsion/thrust system, which includes components such as the engine and propellers connected to a gearbox.

Second: Houthis' arsenal of drones and their local manufacture

Given the number of aircraft shot down by the Arab Coalition, and the data of the Houthi military spokesman, Brigadier Yahya Saree, the number of drones controlled by the Houthis exceeds a thousand. 25% of these aircraft are used for reconnaissance and surveillance. Beginning in 2019, the Houthis witnessed a boom in the acquisition and local assembly of these drones, to the extent that Houthi armed forces spokesman, Brigadier Yahya Saree, says that they can "produce a drone every day."⁴ The question here is how did the Houthis reach this ability to manufacture or assemble drones?

¹ How Do Drones Work and What Is Drone Technology, Drones on, 1 October 2020, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3B3GzgI>

² كيف تعمل الطائرات بدون طيار؟، دويش فيله، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/34jtdRC>

³ Drones: What are they and how do they work? Available at the following link: BBC, <https://bbc.in/34AxU9y>

⁴ الطائرات المسييرة: كيف أصبحت سلاح الحوثيين الاستراتيجي لاستهداف عمق السعودية؟، العربي الجديد، 16 مايو 2019، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3GxASsw>

By examining a number of Houthi drones that were shot down by the Arab Coalition, we find the phrase “Made in Yemen” on some of the planes. However, the Houthis, until this moment, are unable to manufacture a 100% local drone, as the Houthi group’s manufacturing department, or what is known as the unmanned air force, relies on the imported external components in manufacturing the drones, some of which are commercially available on electronic marketing platforms, and most of these components come alongside other weapons from Iran⁵ or through a wide and multiple networks of intermediaries to hide the end-user, according to the missile defense project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The components are smuggled from the Sultanate of Oman through its borders from Al Mahra Governorate⁶ and the city of Al Ghaydah, and then these components are transported by small boats along the coast⁷ to reach the port of Hodeidah, which is controlled by the Houthis⁸ or Saada governorate. These components from Iran, which according to the Security Council Panel of Experts include UAV engines, guidance systems, liquid/solid fuel components, are then combined with locally available components and imported industrial materials such as fiberglass⁹.

To prove the above, the Houthis' most advanced drones, such as "Sammad-3", for example, are marked by the type of engine. According to the Conflict Armament Research, which tracked the impact of two engines found in the wreckage of the Sammad-3 aircraft, the engine takes the number (3W-110i B2) and is manufactured at the "3W Modellmotoren" factory, which is a factory in Hanau in Germany, which confirms with great confidence that the Houthis obtained this engine either through

⁵ Cashing in on Guns: Identifying the Nexus between Small Arms, Light Weapons and Terrorist Financing, International Center – Counter Terrorism, Page 54, Available at the following link: <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2021/03/SALW-Report.pdf>

⁶ The Iranian and Houthi War against Saudi Arabia, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2021, page 5, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3J6ZtWV>

⁷ Oman must isolate, not embrace, the Houthis, The American Enterprise Institute, 22 January 2022, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3rumXPS>

⁸ Yemen government approves more fuel ships to dock at Hodeida port, Reuters, 15 April 2021, Available at the following link: <https://reut.rs/3GoPDy0>

⁹ Letter dated 27 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council, para 62, Page 25, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3B0Syvw>

smuggling or through other intermediaries¹⁰. According to the team of experts, the two engines were among a shipment of 21 such engines exported in June 2015 to “Euro wings Aviation and Consultancy” in Athens¹¹. The documents showed that the shipment crossed from Greece to Turkey to finally reach the logistics company known as “Giti Reslan Kala”, which received the shipment on behalf of another company known as “Tafe Gostar Atlas” based in Tehran, Iran, before these engines were found in the wreckage of an aircraft launched by the Houthis in 2018.

There are other indications that Iran provided the Houthis with drones in the early stages of the conflict in Yemen, when the Arab Coalition shot down two drones that had attacked Abha International Airport on May 26, 2018, from Qasef -1. By analyzing the photos of the drones that were shot down by the Arab Coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen, it was found that the characteristics and specifications of the aircraft are similar to the Iranian-made “Ababeel T” drone manufactured by the Iranian (HESA) company for drones¹².

Here we must point out that despite the Houthis’ inability to manufacture a drone, a complete local industry, and their reliance in this industry and in the operation and maintenance process on trainers and consultants affiliated with the Quds Force¹³ in the period from 2015 to 2017, which also included the travel of some military leaders of the Houthis to train on the use of these aircraft at (Kashan) base, north of Isfahan in Iran¹⁴, up to the provision of advisers from Hezbollah in Lebanon to train the Houthis after that date¹⁵. However, at this stage, the Houthis became able to assemble and operate the components of drones, including combat drones. The Houthis reached this stage in the widespread use of these drones in international markets, which allows armed groups, whether legally

¹⁰ Evolution of UAVs employed by Houthi forces in Yemen, 6 April 2021, Available at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3ouVnjz>

¹¹ رسالة مؤرخة بتاريخ 25 يناير 2019 إلى رئيس مجلس الأمن من فريق الخبراء المعني باليمن، فقرة 78، ص 35، على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.undocs.org/ar/S/2019/83>

¹² HESA Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company, Global Security, Available at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3utvNPK>

¹³ حُصر دور مستشاري الحرس الثوري الإيراني على التواجد في صنعا وموقع بناء الصواريخ في صعدة. تم تشبيه هؤلاء المستشارين بأنهم كالماس بالنسبة للحوثيين واحتفظ بهم في أماكن آمنة للمساعدة في تقديم المشورة والتوجيهات التشغيلية والاستراتيجية.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 6, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3J6ZtWV>

¹⁵ Ibid, page 5, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3J6ZtWV>

or through intermediaries, to acquire these aircraft or their components. Also, the availability of technical knowledge of these aircraft on the internet and the training received by Houthi military personnel from the Quds Force in Iran¹⁶, makes the Houthis, at least for the time being, able to modify aircraft they already own to develop their ability to carry more explosives¹⁷. Without curbing smuggling activities and preventing the components of these aircraft from reaching the Houthis, in accordance with its Security Council resolutions, the Houthis will relentlessly increase their arsenal of drones.

The Houthis own about 15 types of drones that differ according to their combat and reconnaissance capabilities, they hold an exhibition every year to review new weapons, among these weapons is a wing of drones. **In February 2017, the Houthis revealed for the first time that they possess drones**, and specified the missions of these drones in; carrying out combat missions; carrying out survey tasks; Survey, evaluation, and early warning. During an exhibition held by the Houthis and photos of which were leaked to the media, "Hudhud-1", "Rakib", "Rased", and "Qasef-1" aircraft were witnessed. In April 2018, the Houthis announced other types of drones, such as "Sammad -2, Sammad -3, and Qasef -2K." In March 2021, they announced their most important drone, the Sammad 4, which has a range of 2,000 km and can carry two bombs, the size of which is 25 kg.

Third: Iran's smuggling of drone components to the Houthis

Iranian support for the Houthis in Yemen began early, this support included military and media support. This support can be seen in statements by Iranian officials. For example, Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated in October 2014, that Iran "supports what he called the legitimate struggles of Ansar Allah in Yemen, this movement is considered "a part of the successful Islamic Awakening movements," he said. In April 2021, and unusually, General Rostam

¹⁶ Iran's Expansion in the Middle East Is Hitting a Wall, Foundation for Political Science and Politics (SWP), Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3J949M1>

¹⁷ The US Army War College Quarterly, Parameter's page 75, Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3Lhlqom>

¹⁷ مساعد قائد فيلق القدس: كل ما يمتلكه الحوثيون من أسلحة بفضل مساعدتنا ولدينا مستشارين عسكريين في اليمن، المصدر أونلاين، 22 فبراير 2022، على <https://bit.ly/3Lraq7Z> الرابط التالي:

Qassemi, the assistant commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, stated in a press interview that Iran is providing military advisory assistance to the Houthis, adding that all the weapons that the Houthis possess are due to help Iran¹⁸. After imposing an arms embargo on the Houthis, as its leader and a number of its leaders undermine stability in the region, Iran has smuggled components of drones along with other weapons to the Houthis.

There are four ways by which Iran exports drones components to the Houthis

1. By transporting the components by air or sea to the Sultanate of Oman, and then smuggling them through the land ports linking Oman with the Al-Mahra governorate, despite the latter being under the control of the legitimate government. For example, Security forces in Al Jawf governorate seized a shipment of components for drones in January 2019, this shipment carries about three tons of parts and components that are used in the manufacture of drones, among which are "DLE 110" and "DLE 170" engines. The Security Council's team of experts on Yemen confirmed that these two engines are used in the "Qasef and Sammad" drones, and were manufactured by a company in Hong Kong, China, and then exported to an entity called "BAHJAT AlleQ, A", located in the Omani capital, Muscat, and the shipment was received At Muscat International Airport on December 2, 2018, after that this shipment was exported to the free zone in the Omani city of Salalah. A month later, the shipment appeared again in the Yemeni governorate of Al-Jawf.¹⁹
2. The second way of smuggling drones components from Iran to the Houthis, is by shipping them on commercial ships as goods, and the smuggling journey begins from one of Iran's ports or other ports and takes diversionary paths before it reaches Yemeni ports, and passes either through ports in India or Thailand to avoid what is known as the International Inspection Mechanism. This type of smuggling is represented in the ship seized by the coalition forces on February 14, 2016, near the port of Hodeidah. The ship was carrying military communications

¹⁸ مساعد قائد فيلق القدس: كل ما يمتلكه الحوثيون من أسلحة بفضل مساعداتنا ولدينا مستشارين عسكريين في اليمن، المصدر أونلاين، 22 فبراير 2022، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3Lraq7Z>

¹⁹ Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3smeaib>

devices and various equipment used for military purposes inside containers originating from the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, it had stopped temporarily in the port of Djibouti and a port in India before it was seized²⁰.

3. The third method is represented in direct smuggling through boats that depart from one of the Iranian ports, and arrive either off the coast of Oman, and then are smuggled either by land or by sea to the Houthis located in Al-Mahra Governorate.
4. The fourth method is by delivering these components to warehouses of merchants working for Iran in ports in Somalia and Djibouti, which is a center for Houthi smugglers who receive these shipments and then smuggle them to the coasts of Yemen to be the Houthis' final destination²¹.

Fourth: Houthi drone launch areas

The Houthis do not declare their operational aircraft launch areas. The bases and airstrips from which these aircraft and airstrips are launched remain secret so that they are not targeted. But, according to our monitoring, the Houthis have found that they often launch their aircraft from the Al-Dilmi airbase next to Sana'a airport, as well as the airstrips in Hudaydah Governorate. It is also a ballistic missile launch area, as well as aircraft from the province of Saada, the Houthi community stronghold, as well as aircraft from a Houthi military base in northern Amran Governorate, along the airstrips of the Sana'a Aviation College, the Headquarters House camps in the capital's secretariat, and Al-Hafa camp east of the capital, Sana'a, and the Corps of Engineers camp in the Beni Hashish Directorate, Sana'a.

Fifth: Effects of the use of drones on civilians

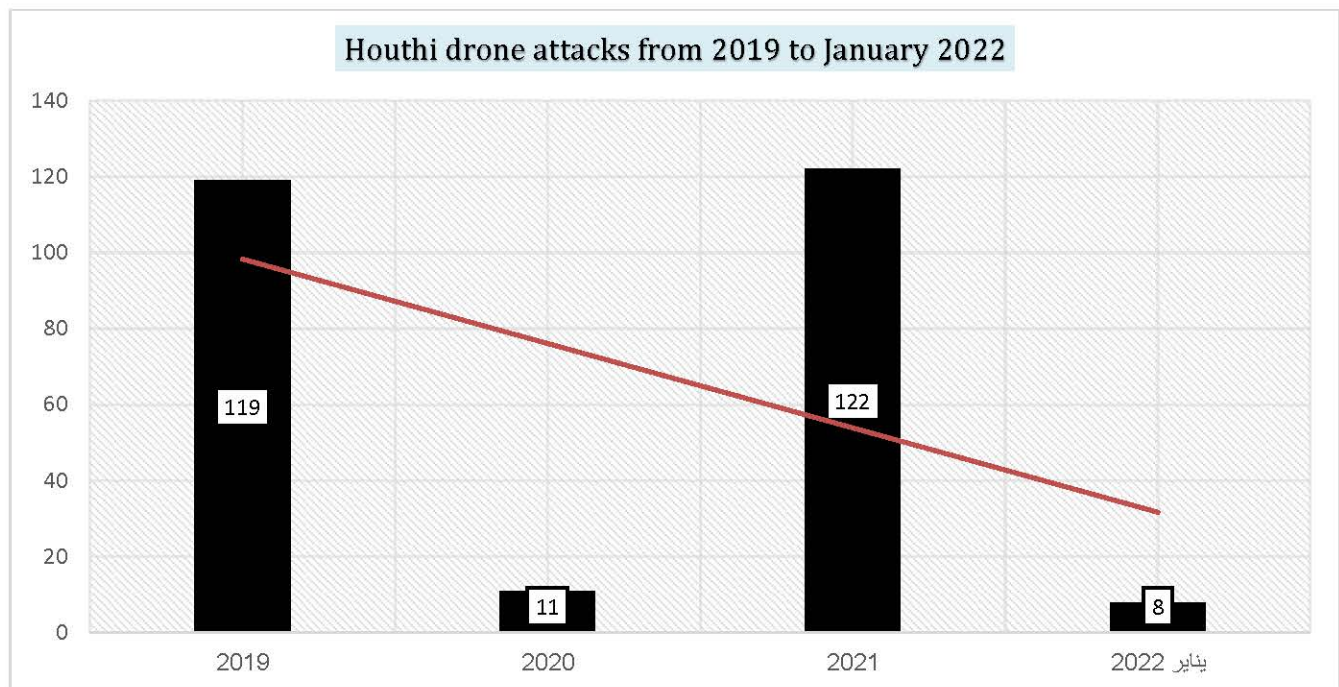
The Houthis carried out more than 260 terrorist attacks (one attack may consist of more than 20 drones) on civilian and military targets using drones during the period from 2019 to the end of January 2022. More than 35% of these attacks were directed at civilian targets and objects, whether in

²⁰ Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3smeaib>

²¹ Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3smeaib>

Yemen or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 2021 saw the highest number of attacks, with 122 terrorist operations, while 2019 saw the second largest number of attacks, with 119 drone operations, 62 civilian targets, while 2020 was the lowest year of launching drone attacks, with only 11 drone attacks as monitored by Maat for Peace, may be due to the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic. Maat for Peace noted that eight terrorist operations were carried out by the Houthis in 2022, including three attacks directed at civilian targets and vital facilities in the United Arab Emirates²². As for the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, 851 drones were shot down on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia only from the start of the Decisive Storm in March 2015 until the end of 2021, and 59 Saudi civilians were killed in these attacks.²³

Figure No. (1) Houthi attacks using drones from 2019 to January 2022



These attacks have had negative effects on civilians, contrary to their right to life, which is independent and inalienable and guaranteed under article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Yemen has ratified and to which the Houthi are supposed to be bound as

²² تجميع الباحث

²³ التحالف العربي: 59 مدنيا سعوديا قتلوا في هجمات الحوثيين على السعودية، روسيا اليوم، 26 ديسمبر 2021، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/3GxOLHx>

de facto control of several governorates and exercise functions that are elevated to State functions. This is consistent with the statement of the High Commissioner and several mandate holders in the framework of special procedures that when groups outside the state exercise functions similar to those of states, they become obligated to respect international human rights law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Based on the foregoing, the Houthis did not observe In their attacks respect these international human rights standards and the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law. The number of civilian casualties is estimated at 3,000 civilians, who are divided between dead and injured, mostly in Yemen, as a result of drone attacks in Yemen, not to mention the damage to civilian objects and facilities such as homes, hospitals, and schools²⁴, in contravention with the four Geneva Conventions, especially Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions, which guarantees protection for civilians and individuals not participating in hostilities in non-international armed conflicts²⁵, and the following are the most prominent facts documented by Maat for Peace and as a result of which civilians were killed or injured in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

- On January 17, 2022, three drones (Sammad 3) targeted civilian facilities in the capital, Abu Dhabi, which resulted in the death of 3 people and the injury of 6 others, most of whom were civilians.
- On 24 January 2022, the Houthis targeted with "Sammad 3" aircraft other civilian installations in Dubai, which resulted in no casualties, according to a statement by the UAE Ministry of Defense. In conjunction with this attack, the group targeted military and civilian sites in the Jizan and Asir area with Iranian-made missiles (Sammad 1 and 2K).
- On 6 October 2021, the Houthis launched a drones bomb at Abha International Airport. 4 civilians working at the airport have injured as a result of this attack.

²⁴ تداعيات التوسع في استخدام الطائرات بدون طيار علي المدنيين، مؤسسة ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3Lity7N>

²⁵ سبعون عاما على اعتماد اتفاقيات جنيف-- ومجلس الأمن يشدد على تعزيز القانون الإنساني، أخبار الأمم المتحدة، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3B0iUa>

- In August 2021, for example, the Houthis fired a missile at a civilian airport in Abha, wounding eight civilians. The US State Department strongly condemned the strikes, noting that "the Houthi attacks perpetuate the conflict, prolong the suffering of the Yemeni people, and threaten peace efforts at a critical moment."²⁶
- On 24 May 2021, the Houthis carried out a two-drone attack targeting a popular market in Ma'rib Governorate. As a result of this attack, more than 10 civilians, including women and children, were wounded.²⁷
- On 16 May 2021, the Houthis carried out a drone attack in the Taif district of the Al-Durayhimi district in southwestern Yemen, killing 20-year-old Abdullah Faisal and injuring 7 others.²⁸
- On May 17, 2021, the Houthis carried out a two-drone attack targeting a restaurant in the Koud area, also in Al-Hodeidah Governorate, which resulted in the killing of 2 civilians and the imprisonment of 7 others.²⁹
- In November 2019, a three-plane marching attack on the town of Mocha in Taiz province killed eight people, including three civilians. According to a statement from government forces on the west coast, the attacks also targeted a refugee camp and a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders in the Mocha area.³⁰

Not only did the Houthis violate the right to life in Yemen, but also terrified children and forced families to stop sending them to school, thus depriving them of the right to quality and equitable education, in contravention of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights and the SDG 4. The Houthis' intensive use of drones, for example, in the Ma'rib governorate, led to the residents' fear of sending their children to school because of the fear for their lives. The use of these aircraft creates an atmosphere of fear in the communities affected and causes serious psychological damage

²⁶ واشنطن تدين استهداف مطار أبها وتحصي عدد الهجمات التي شنها الحوثيون على أراض سعودية، روسيا اليوم، 1 سبتمبر 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/35NoIz7>

²⁷ <https://bit.ly/3jG92Ca> ميليشيا الحوثي تستهدف سوق شعبي بمسيرة مفخخة في مأرب، الوطن، 24 مايو 2021، على الرابط التالي:

²⁸ استخدام قوات الحوثي للطيران المسير في هجومها على المدنيين بالحديدة تطور خطير يستوجب المساعدة، سام للحقوق والحريات، 19 مايو 2021، على <https://bit.ly/3CjXc7V> الرابط التالي

²⁹ نفس المرجع السابق

³⁰ Several killed in Houthi missile, drone attack: Yemeni officials, Aljazeera, 7 November 2019, <https://bit.ly/3ovXG5Q>

that extends for years. In addition to the loss of life and the deprivation of education for children, drone attacks are causing individuals to stop practicing their usual cultural and religious activities because members of affected communities avoid any gatherings for fear of being targeted, according to the summary of the Human Rights Council's interactive panel of experts on the use of aircraft Remotely piloted or armed unmanned aircraft for use in accordance with international law.³¹

In parallel with the military escalation in Ma'rib Governorate, the **Houthis carried out intensive attacks on civilian objects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**. The aforementioned attack, carried out in September 2021 with three ballistic missiles and three drones against the eastern and Jizan region is the fiercest on civilian objects, as two children were injured as a result of the scattering of shrapnel from those missiles after being intercepted by the Air Defense Forces, while 14 homes owned by civilians were damaged in Saudi Arabia.³² In these attacks, the Houthis did not observe the protection guaranteed to civilian objects in international humanitarian law, and these attacks contradict the principle of good-neighborliness contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Biden to cancel his predecessor Trump's decision to consider the Houthis a foreign terrorist group.³³

In any case, Houthi attacks using aircraft operating either inside Yemen or against neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia and, more recently, the escalation against the UAE contradict the provisions of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Maat for Peace believes that the provision by States of mobile aircraft to other actors exacerbates the dire situation of civilians in areas of armed conflict³⁴. Even in the absence of an international instrument regulating the sale of drones, the Houthis are under an obligation to respect international human rights law.

³¹ Summary of the Human Rights Council interactive panel discussion of experts on the use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in compliance with international law, Para 7, Page 4, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/28/38>

³² Two children injured and 14 houses damaged in Saudi's Dammam in latest Houthi attacks, Gulf Business, 5 September 2021, <https://bit.ly/3A5isGT>

³³ <https://bit.ly/3FEWC6X> مؤشر الإرهاب في المنطقة العربية، مؤسسة ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان، ص 13، على الرابط التالي:

³⁴ وفقا للجنة الدولية للصليب الأحمر فإنه " لم يرد ذكر الطائرات بدون طيار بشكل محدد في معاهدات الأسلحة أو صكوك القانون الدولي الإنساني الأخرى. ومع ذلك فإن استخدام أي نظام من نظم الأسلحة بما في ذلك الطائرات المسلحة بدون طيار أثناء النزاعات المسلحة يخضع بوضوح لقواعد القانون الدولي الإنساني. ويعني هذا، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، أنه يجب على أطراف نزاع ما عند استخدام الطائرات بدون طيار أن تميز دائماً بين المقاتلين والمدنيين وبين الأهداف العسكرية والأهداف المدنية.

According to the consensus of a group of special procedures mandate-holders, when non-State actors such as the Houthis exercised functions akin to those imposed on them under international human rights law, which is consistent with the High Commissioner for Human Rights³⁵ when he acknowledged that this view was confirmed by the general recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which stated that States failed, and sub-State actors exercised certain functions. In such cases, such groups may have a range of obligations under the Convention.³⁶

Sixth: The Houthis' escalation against the UAE

The UAE participated in the Arab coalition to support legitimacy with soldiers and logistical support at the beginning of the conflict in Yemen between the Arab coalition and the Houthis. But, after the killing of Emirati soldiers in Yemen in 2019, the UAE began in July 2019 to withdraw its forces in Yemen.³⁷ This withdrawal was completed in February 2020 after celebrating hundreds of soldiers returning from Yemen³⁸, it was limited to a limited presence and support for some local forces. According to the UAE Foreign Minister at the time, Anwar Gargash, the UAE believed that the situation no longer required maintaining large Emirati forces, and stressed that his country would continue humanitarian, economic, and diplomatic efforts, and the statement issued by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time indicated that the UAE military presence in Yemen would be restricted to "anti-terror" efforts. During this period, officials in the political office of the Ansar Allah group, the political arm of the Houthis, welcomed this withdrawal, followed by stopping any drone attacks on the UAE and limiting these attacks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But in early 2022, forces claimed to be backed by the UAE, called the "Giant Brigades", with the support of the Arab coalition forces to support legitimacy, began a strong campaign to control the city of Shabwa, and controlling this city

³⁵ صعود الجهات الفاعلة غير الحكومية المسلحة وفشلنا في الرد بشكل مناسب، معهد غرب آسيا وشمال إفريقيا، 16 يناير 2015، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/2ZEBaLe>

³⁶ <https://bit.ly/3gtoQWK> التوصية العامة للجنة المعنية بالقضاء على كافة أشكال التمييز ضد المرأة، على الرابط التالي:

³⁷ Yemen: UAE confirms withdrawal from port city of Hodeida, The guardian, <https://bit.ly/3J31d3m>

³⁸ The UAE may have withdrawn from Yemen, but its influence remains strong, Middle East Institute, <https://bit.ly/3sIUZFb>

represents a strategic gain as it serves as an access point to the oil-rich Ma'rib Governorate and the last strongholds of the Yemeni government in northern Yemen. With the control of these forces over a number of directorates in the governorates of Shabwa, southern Ma'rib, and Al Bayda, the Houthis began to threaten the UAE, and escalate against it, whether through drone attacks or press and media statements. He said, "The Americans and the Israeli-British pushed the Emirati to return to the escalation and implicated it, and the Emirati is the loser by returning to escalation."³⁹ What also confirms that the reason for the escalation against the UAE is what the giant brigade forces have achieved, the statement of Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the military spokesman for the Houthis, that the attacks on the UAE will continue, If the latter continues its military activities in Yemen. On the other hand, there is another possibility that is not supported by strong evidence, which may explain the Houthi escalation against the UAE at this particular time, which is Iran's attempt to repair its relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This may be reflected in a settlement in Yemen that does not achieve the goals of the Houthis, and by attacking the UAE, the Houthis are trying to undermine Iranian efforts to repair relations with UAE, which the latter views as a strategic ally of the Houthis.⁴⁰

Recommendations

- The international community should pay special attention to the Yemeni Navy and Coast Guard forces, increase the financial support directed to these forces, and provide them with all kinds of support, including technical support and training that would enable them to control the beaches and seaports to prevent smuggling activities.
- The international community should strengthen efforts to prevent illicit transfers of Iranian arms to the Houthis in Yemen, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2216 (2015)

³⁹ زعيم الحوثيين يتوعد الإمارات بسبب "عودتها للتصعيد"، روسيا اليوم، 3 فبراير 2022، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3rtSVMb>

⁴⁰ Experts react: Iran-backed Houthis launched a drone attack in Abu Dhabi. What challenges lie ahead for the region, Atlantic Council, 24 January 2022, <https://bit.ly/3B3WhZt>

- The United States should allocate additional resources to collecting and analyzing intelligence on Iranian smuggling routes, as well as conducting naval and air patrols to intercept incoming arms shipments to the Houthis.
- The need to formulate clear legal policies on the use of lethal force by drones in line with previous discussions led by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) that called for improved norms and standards related to the use of drones.
- Abide by the recommendations of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference attended by the Houthis that the use of drones should cease.
- The need to abide by the Berlin Memorandum of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which included action to prevent drones from reaching armed groups as a threat to national armies.
- The need to comply with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1540, prohibiting the delivery of armed aircraft technology to terrorist groups.
- The need to enact an international instrument regulating the import of drones and preventing their access to extremist groups.
- The need to develop appropriate legal and operational frameworks to regulate the use of these aircraft and the sale of technology used in their manufacture in a manner consistent with international law standards, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
- The need to adopt a resolution at the 49th session of the Human Rights Council containing an annual report on the victims of the marching airstrikes for discussion by the Human Rights Council.
- The United States should reclassify the Houthis as a terrorist group and include the individuals and companies involved in the manufacture of mobile aircraft.