

TAIZ..DISTURBED SECURITY

A HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DOCUMENTING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IN THE YEMENI
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS OF TAIZ

During the Period from May 2015 to December 2021





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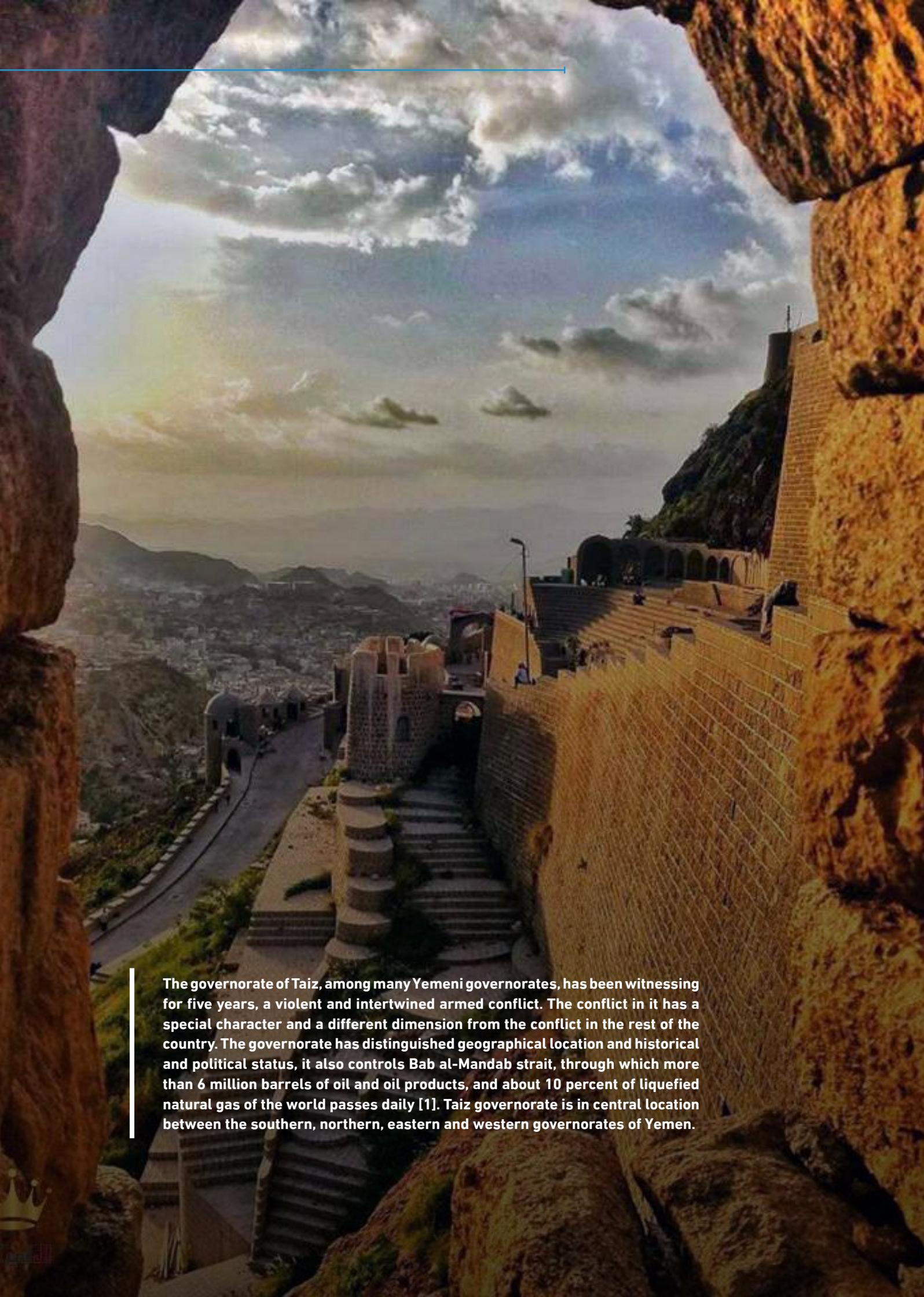
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The governorate of Taiz, among many Yemeni governorates, has been witnessing for five years, a violent and intertwined armed conflict. The conflict in it has a special character and a different dimension from the conflict in the rest of the country. The governorate has distinguished geographical location and historical and political status, it also controls Bab al-Mandab strait, through which more than 6 million barrels of oil and oil products, and about 10 percent of liquefied natural gas of the world passes daily [1]. Taiz governorate is in central location between the southern, northern, eastern and western governorates of Yemen.

INTRODUCTION

For seven years, Taiz governorate has been witnessing a violent and intertwined armed conflict, which has a special character and a different dimension from the conflict in the other governorates. The governorate is distinguished by its geographical location overlooking the Bab al-Mandab strait, through which “more than 6 million barrels of oil and its derivatives and about 10 percent of the world’s liquefied natural gas” pass per day.”⁽¹⁾ Taiz lies in the center of the southern, northern, eastern and western Yemeni governorates.

Taiz has its historical and political position as it was and still is an incubator for national liberation movements, whether those that struggled for the independence of South Yemen from the British colonialism, or the movements that struggled to liberate North Yemen from the authority of the Imamate (Zaydi) rule, which ruled that part for decades. Taiz is described as the starting point of national politics, which have worked since the 1940s to enlighten the local community in order to confront the ideas of colonialism and tyranny in southern and northern Yemen. Consequently, the political thought is still present in Taiz at an acceptable pace, which is hard to find in the two capitals of Yemen, the Permanent Capital of Sana’a and Aden, Yemen’s interim capital. In 2013, it was declared the cultural capital of the Republic of Yemen.

(1) Maal Economic newspaper. Bab al-Mandeb. The oil gateway to Europe is on the firing line. 26 July 20 <https://www.maaal.com/archives/20180726/110348>



Taiz was the starting point of the Yemeni youth protests calling for the overthrow of the regime of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2011. Therefore, it was one of the first governorates targeted by the alliance of (former President Saleh and the Houthis) after they had taken control of the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014.

Since 2015, Taiz has been experiencing a multifaced, multilateral, and multidimensional armed conflict fueled by sides and parties that seek to extend influence and achieve material and political gains. In addition to the most prominent and ongoing conflict between the alliance of the forces of former President Saleh and the Houthis on the one hand, and the government forces which confronted the former's desire to control the province on the other hand, other conflicts erupted. Most of these conflicts were concentrated in center of the city of Taiz, such as the conflict between the governmental forces "Taiz Axis" and "Abu Al-Abbas Brigades". A third fighting broke out between the government forces and armed groups belonging to extremist organizations. There are also limited conflicts either between the government forces and small armed groups or among armed groups, in addition to the fighting between Houthi Group and locals in Houthi-held areas.

Al-Hujariya and the south-western countryside of Taiz witnessed fighting between government forces, the "Taiz Axis" and the "35th Armored Brigade". During the two years 2020-2019, there were signs of conflict between the government forces and the national resistance led by Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh, supported by the UAE, on the western coast of Taiz. "SAM" noticed tension between the units known as "joint forces" supported by the UAE on the west coast.

This report has focused on the armed conflict erupted between the government forces on one hand, and other government forces represented by the UAE-backed Abu Al-Abbas Brigades from the other hand and has summarized this conflict. Additionally, the report presents examples of human rights violations committed in areas controlled by the government in Taiz, the most notable of which are assassinations, extrajudicial executions, attacks on populations, inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and burglary.

The conflict resulted in humanitarian, economic and social damage to the civilian population and affected the performance of the local authorities, which suffer from structural fragility in light of the government's remarkable absence in Taiz and its unwillingness to reduce the risks of insecurity and end the military fighting. Residents hope from the newly formed Presidential Leadership Council to take a serious move that restores the compass of

attention to Taiz after years of neglect by the government of former President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The government forces suffer a structural fragility and political polarization, so do civil institutions. It is noteworthy that the political parties played a negative role in attracting the military forces and influencing their decisions. The Islah Party has a noticeable influence on the government forces. The Nasserist Party and the General People's Congress Party (Mutamaar) also have influence on the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and the former 35th Armored Brigade. The General People's Congress Party also has an influence on the National Resistance Forces, and these parties and the Yemeni Socialist Party have an influence on the work of civil institutions.

The foreign interventions of the UAE and Saudi Arabia played a role in fueling the division between the armed formations affiliated with the Yemeni government, and it was reinforced by the government forces' fears of the UAE-backed military forces on the West Coast.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since 2015, Taiz has witnessed a violent and intertwined armed conflict, which has a special character from the conflict in other governorates and is fueled by sides and parties seeking to extend influence and achieve material and political gains. The governorate's geographical location and its cultural, historical and political status played a major role in this conflict.

Various conflicts erupted in Taiz, most notably between the forces of Hothi Group and its ally, the forces of former President Saleh on the one hand, and the government forces on the other, which has not stopped yet. Besides, there are other conflicts including the conflict between the government forces



and extremist organizations, the conflict among the government forces or between them and armed gangs, the conflict of groups against each other, in addition to the conflict which breaks out from time to time between the Houthi group and local residents in the Houthi-controlled areas.

From the late 2019 until the first eight months of 2020, a conflict erupted between the forces of the Taiz Axis and the forces of the 35th Armored Brigade in the Hujariya areas, south of Taiz, which ended with the first taking control of the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade. There were signs of conflict between the government forces on the one hand, and the National Resistance Forces led by Tariq Saleh on the western coast of Taiz on the other.

The report has focused on the conflict which erupted between the government forces and other government forces represented by Abu Al-Abbas Brigades which are supported by the UAE. The report has also cited examples of a number of crimes, most notably assassinations, illegal executions, inhumane treatment, attacks on the population, arbitrary detention, private prisons and control of private homes and real estate, which were committed by various parties in Taiz.

The report indicates that the United Arab Emirates has fueled the conflict in Taiz through its support of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, the joint forces on the West Coast, and to a lesser extent the 35th Armored Brigade, as well as influential political and local figures. It is believed that other countries have entered the conflict line since August 2019 by supporting influential figures who established armed formations. The report showed that the structural fragility of government forces and political polarization drew them into conflict and competition besides the clear absence of government support and sufficient attention to the military and civil institutions in Taiz.

The report monitored some of the violations committed as a result of the armed conflict and the security deterioration for the period from May 2015 to December 2021. The report included an introduction, methodology and background to the events, the legal framework and statistics of the monitored violations, four chapters, and recommendations for a number of parties.

Chapter I dealt with the conflicts witnessed by Taiz and discussed their narrative in seven sections: the conflict of government forces with the forces of the Houthi-Saleh alliance, the conflict of the government forces with the extremist organizations, the conflict of the government forces with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, the conflict of the government forces with the 35th Armored Brigade, the conflict between the government forces and the national resistance on the West Coast, the conflict of armed groups with each other, and the conflict of Houthi forces with local residents in their areas of control.

Chapter II is devoted to talk about the government forces' conflict with other government forces loyal to the Emirates represented by the Abu Abbas Brigades. It was divided into three sections: The first talked about the description and nature of the conflict, the second about the relationship between the Abu Abbas Brigades and extremist organizations, and the last about the role of the UAE in this conflict.

Because of the importance of accountability and justice, the report devoted

chapter III to talk about this and was divided into two sections: the first deals with those responsible for the conflict and crimes, and it has divided them into two parts: Military, security and civilian leaders, including 23 names and leaders while the second part includes entities, factions, armed gangs and influential figures, under which (41) armed parties and influential figures fall. The second section dealt with accountability and impunity.

Chapter IV concerned with examples of crimes and violations documented by "SAM" during the reporting period. The organization was able to collect information and it formed a comprehensive idea about them. This does not mean that no other violations were committed, but rather that we believe they were not systematic, or we did not obtain sufficient evidence. The most prominent of these crimes are assassinations, illegal executions, ill-treatment, attacks, burial of corpses in clandestine graves, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, private prisons, and looting of homes and private real estate in eight sections.

The first section of chapter IV dealt with examples of killing by means of assassination. Taiz has witnessed a wave of assassinations of government officers, activists, and civilians, including women. The report concluded that the Islamic State "ISIS" and Ansar Al-Sharia were the most senior accused in committing this crime, as well as leaders in the Abu al-Abbas Brigades who were implicated in committing a number of them, in addition to government recruits, armed gangs, influential figures outside the governorate and unknown persons believed to be linked to extremist organizations.

In the second section of Chapter IV, the report concentrated on the crime of murder by means of liquidation and unlawful executions. It concluded that most of these crimes have gone unpunished. The most prominent parties that perpetrated these crimes are the extremist organizations, the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, and armed groups, some of whose members belong to the government forces, as well as government forces and other unknown parties.

As for section four, it dealt with the crime of torture and inhuman treatment. It concluded that these violations were practiced systematically even though there were limited victims. The most prominent parties that committed these crimes are the Taiz Axis Forces, Military Intelligence, 17th Infantry Brigade, Taiz Police, the Abu Abbas Brigades, extremist organizations, and 35th Armored Brigade.

The fourth section was devoted to talking about the victims of the attacks that were committed during the fighting or the incidents which resulted from the insecurity and the criminal incidents. Light and medium weapons were used by the combatants against each other and against civilians, especially in the fighting that often broke out in over-populated neighborhoods or commercial markets and public streets.

The fifth section of chapter IV reviewed the findings of the investigation conducted by the organization after the security services revealed four secret clandestine graves, containing (16) bodies. It was concluded that the areas where these graves were found were under the control of the extremist organizations and the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades.

The sixth and seventh sections discussed the arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and private prisons. "SAM" believes that all the military forces, factions, and armed groups perpetrated these crimes in different proportions, and the figures included in this report reveal the extent of these practices.

The last section discusses the looting of homes and private real estate. The report concluded that leaders of the government forces were involved in the looting, along with influential people and leaders of armed gangs. It is noted that most of the victims of this type of violation are former government leaders, merchants and residents who have been displaced from the city, or vulnerable local residents who are unable to stand against these actions.

METHODOLOGY

“Absent Conscience” is a human rights report that reveals human rights situation in Taiz (areas affiliated with the Yemeni government) from May 2015 to the end of December 2021, through which “SAM” worked to shed light on human rights violations in a manner that is close to truth, and it doesn’t claim to have covered all its details.

SAM’s team worked in deteriorating security conditions but was able to monitor the stages of the conflict and catch the strings of the complex situation in Taiz, as well as obtaining a lot of information and documenting many crimes until the report reached this conclusion about a city that has been affected by a lot of destruction, devastation and distortion.

The organization operated in accordance with international standards for human rights documentation and was committed to credibility, integrity, professionalism, objectivity, impartiality and respect for authorities at maximum.

“SAM” conducted more than (250) interviews and direct meetings with sources of information, victims, witnesses, women, children, political, military, and security leaders, activists and health personnel. It has also relied on official documents, documented media statements, and human rights reports from local and international organizations and the panel of experts on Yemen. It also collected dozens of documents, interviews, photos, and medical and technical reports of the victims and relied on alternative means to access information sources, such as using communication technology and opening an electronic window to receive complaints. The report listed the names of witnesses and some victims with pseudonyms at their request or out of the organization’s concern for their lives.

The report listed examples revealing the extent of human rights violations. The organization was keen to count the real number of victims during the reporting period; however, it faced difficulty in doing so, and the statistics included in the report are the closest to the truth.

“SAM” checked into those responsible for the conflict or violations, whether parties or individuals, or those who had a negative role in bringing the security and humanitarian situation in Taiz to this point of decline. The report listed many of them, their responsibilities, or the actions assigned to them.

In the context of preserving impartiality and objectivity, “SAM” sent (11) letters in March and April 2020 to the parties in Taiz in order to know their point of view and requested a written clarification to be included in the report and the organization’s website. These parties included former Chief Public Prosecutor lawyer Abdul-Wahed Mansour, the Governor of Taiz Nabil Shamsan, Commander of Taiz Axis Khaled Fadel, Taiz Police Director Mansour Al-Akhali, former Commander of 22nd Brigade Mika Sadeq Sarhan, leader of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades Adel Abdu Farea (Abu Al-Abbas), former Chief of Staff of 35th Armored Brigade Abdul-Malik Al-Ahadal, Director of the Political Security Agency Abdul-Wahed Sarhan, Commander of the Special Forces Jamil Aqlan, Deputy Governor of Taiz Rashad Al-Akhali, and former Governor of Taiz Amin Mahmoud. It received only responses from the commander of the Taiz Axis and the former governor of Taiz.

The report refers to the alliance of Houthi and Saleh forces as the Houthi forces (Hothi Group) and the forces of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and refers to the Houthi forces as a de-facto authority after the killing of Ali Abdullah Saleh in December 2017. It indicates to the paramilitary forces backed by the Yemeni government before they were merged with the government forces as “the popular resistance” and “the military council”.

The report also refers to the Taiz Axis and its brigades, which are (22nd Brigade Mika, 17th Infantry Brigade, 145th Infantry Brigade, 4th Infantry Mountain Brigade, 5th Presidential Guards Brigade, 170th Air Defense Brigade, and Military Police Security), the government forces. The report also refers to the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades and the 35th Armored Brigade, before the appointment of its new commander in 2020, as the UAE-backed government forces. The report described Ansar Al-Sharia and the Islamic State “ISIS” as extremist organizations. The term “national resistance” indicates to the forces led by Tareq Saleh while the UAE-backed “joint forces” refers to the Giants Forces, national resistance and Tihami resistance.

BACKGROUND OF EVENTS

After the Houthi group had seized Sana'a in September 2014 with the support of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the group transferred military equipment and fighters to the Special Security Forces camp⁽¹⁾ east of Taiz in March 2015. Thus, hundreds of young people protested angrily at this

behavior⁽²⁾. The group dealt with them violently, which resulted in killing more than (10) young men. In March and April 2015, the Houthi forces, with the complicity of forces loyal to former President Saleh, took control of Taiz Airport, Mocha Port, and the international line linking Taiz to Aden

In March 2015, the first military battles in Taiz began with the Houthi and Saleh forces' attack on the headquarters of the government's 35th Armored Brigade, west of the city of Taiz. The Houthi and Saleh forces were able to control it in April 2015. Adnan Al-Hammadi, the commander of the brigade, attributed the fall of the site to betrayal from within.⁽³⁾

After the brigade had fallen, the formation of a coordination council for the leadership of the popular resistance, led by Hamoud Saeed Al-Mikhlaifi, was declared and its mission was to: "overthrow the coup of the Houthi and Saleh militia and restore the state and its hijacked institutions... while maintaining security and stability and protecting citizens and public and private institutions."⁽⁴⁾

On 6 May 2015, a military council "to defend the governorate, its security and stability with the popular resistance, and to coordinate efforts to confront the aggression of the Houthi and Saleh forces,"⁽⁵⁾ was announced and it received financial and logistic support from the countries of the Arab Coalition. On 15 January 2016, Yousef Al-Sheraji was

appointed a Commander of the Taiz Axis, which was the first government appointment of a military leader in Taiz since the start of the war.

The battles in the first three years were described as the heaviest between the Houthis and Saleh forces on the one hand and the government forces and the popular resistance forces on the other while they became less intense after those years, punctuated by intermittent periods in which the intensity of the conflict is high.

The security and civilian institutions in the city of Taiz collapsed due to Houthi coup against

State institutions in the capital, Sanaa, and their expansion in the rest of the governorates until they reached the governorate of Taiz were disrupted as most of the staff working there were displaced. Moreover, the city witnessed a sharp wave of displacement.

In June 2015, Council of National Defense led by the former President Abd Rabu Mansour Hadi issued a decision integrating the Popular Resistance Forces into the government forces⁽⁶⁾. Hence eight military brigades were formed⁽⁷⁾

(3) Local sheikh and one of those affiliated with the Islah Party in Taiz

(4) Marib Press. Taiz.. Formation of a coordination council for the leadership of the resistance and a higher advisory body of army leaders. April 30, 2015

https://mail.marebpress.com/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=109238

(5) Al-Arabya. The popular resistance in Taiz announces the formation of a military council. 6 May 2015

<https://bit.ly/34EqkZk>

(6) Sky News Arabia. Yemen.. Integration of "Resistance" fighters into military forces. 28 June 2015

<https://bit.ly/2Ez7VIQ>

(7) 22nd Brigade Mika, 35th Armored Brigade, 170th Air Defense, 17th Infantry Brigade, 145th Infantry Brigade, 5th Presidential Guards Brigade, 4th Infantry Mountain Brigade and Military Police

in Taiz and a number of security services were reestablished.⁽⁸⁾ This large number of military and security units produced security problems in a limited geographic area, not to mention the clear division and the conflicts among government forces.

In October 2017, Washington and the Gulf states included Adel Abdo Farea Othman Al-Dhubhani, nicknamed (Abu Al-Abbas), the leader of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades in Taiz, in the list of terrorism sponsors on charges of “aiding, sponsoring and providing funds, equipment, technical support and other services to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS in Yemen.”⁽⁹⁾ in addition to (11) Yemeni figures and two entities including Bilal Al-Wafi, nicknamed (Abu Al-Waleed), the leader of what is known as Islamic State “ISIS” in Taiz.⁽¹⁰⁾ Abu al-Abbas denied the accusation and denied his connection to terrorist groups.⁽¹¹⁾

In August 2018, the Abu al-Abbas Brigades announced their departure from Taiz because of what they called treachery by “companions in arms” after clashes between them and the Taiz Axis Forces. However,

clashes erupted at an accelerated rate between the two sides in April 2019, and the Taiz Axis forces managed to control the brigades’ areas of influence in the “Old City,” so the brigades said that “their members were being displaced ... by the Popular Mobilization militias affiliated with Islah.”⁽¹²⁾ Later, members of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades have engaged in what is known as the Republic’s Guards Forces led by Tariq Saleh.

In December 2019, it was announced that the commander of 35th Armored Brigade Brigadier General Adnan Al-Hammadi had been murdered under suspicious circumstances. In June 2020, the Yemeni President issued a decision appointing Brigadier General Abdul-Rahman Al-Shamsani as the commander of the brigade, but the brigade’s officers and a group of its recruits rejected the appointment decision. Consequently, Clashes erupted between them and the forces of the Taiz Axis in different areas of the Al-Hujariya districts, and the Taiz Axis forces took control of the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade and installed the

(8) Public Security Forces. special forces. Rescue Forces. National Security Agency. Political Security Agency.

(9) Islamist Movements website. Within the International Center...the Gulf states and the United States have included 11 people and two entities on the list of terrorism. October 26, 2017. <http://www.islamist-movements.com/41333>

(10) Government forces announced his arrest on Saturday, May 18, 2019 in his hometown - Bilad al-Wafi - Jabal Habashi - Taiz

(11) Al-Masdar Online website. «Abu al-Abbas» denies his connection with terrorist groups and demands the «legitimacy» to investigate and drop the charges against him. October 28, 2017 <https://old.almasdaronline.info/article/95068>

(12) Al-Mithaq News.. Abu al-Abbas Brigades reveal that they were subjected to forced displacement by force of arms while original inhabitants of Taiz were being expelled (statement). 27/4/2019 <https://www.almethaqnews.com/news22256.html>

new commander.⁽¹³⁾ The Emirati support for the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and officers in the 35th Armored Brigade contributed to fueling this fighting.⁽¹⁴⁾

Three governors have run the Yemeni government-affiliated area in Taiz since the outbreak of fighting in 2015 and until the issuance of this report. President Hadi appointed Ali al-Maamari, Amin Mahmoud, and Nabil Shamsan as governors respectively.⁽¹⁵⁾

In spite of the manifestations of the conflict that emerged between the National Resistance Forces on the one hand and the Taiz Axis Forces on the other during the years 2019 and 2020, these forces began to converge within the framework of what they regard as military coordination to confront their common enemy, the Houthi forces. So, delegations from both parties exchanged visits.⁽¹⁶⁾ After the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council, whose membership included Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh, the leader of the National Resistance⁽¹⁷⁾, the two forces seemed more compatible with each other.

Many small armed gangs spread in areas controlled by government forces, and these gangs create a source of security inconvenience due to their disturbing actions to the population in light of a clear government inability to control them. Many members of these gangs belong to the government forces or their practices are covered up by leaders belonging to the military and security forces.

(13) Al-Harf 28. «Al-Shamsani» takes over the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade. August 22, 2020 <https://alharf28.com/p-42909>

(14) (...the Abu al-Abbas group and, to a lesser extent, the 35th Brigade, received support from the United Arab Emirates). Page 8. S/2020/70* Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen. January 27, 2020. United Nations-Security Council website.

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ar/sanctions/2140/panel-of-experts/reports>

(15) the first was appointed on 17 January 2016 while the second was appointed on 24 December 2017 and the third was appointed on December 31, 2018

(16) Bawabati. the particulars of the agreement between the Taiz Axis and Forces of Tariq 23/10/2021 <https://bawabatii.net/news297841.html>

(17) France 24. The Yemeni President announces the formation of a presidential leadership council <https://2u.pw/275HR>

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The description of armed conflict is applied to any conflict, even if it is less intense, as long as it is between parties that have an acceptable organization and control, a leadership that directs them, and a weapon that they use against the other. This description applies to the conflicts in Taiz, which are governed by the rules of international human rights law applicable in armed conflicts, the rules of international humanitarian law and within the limits of the obligations that Yemen has accepted in the agreements it has ratified, in addition to domestic law.

The provisions of international human rights law ratified by Yemen set the rules for this conflict, especially the provisions stipulated in the two international covenants and their annexed protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Treatment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols.

The rules of international humanitarian law ratified by Yemen and the rules of customary international law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the Second



Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts, also apply to this conflict. Instead of the obligations of the Yemeni government to protect its citizens in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, it and its forces and local officials are responsible for the “negative obligation” which means that the state is obligated, for example, not to infringe on the right to life by its forces or agents, but it also remains responsible for crimes committed by individuals or private entities. This means that the Yemeni government and its local officials in Taiz have a duty to punish individuals and private entities and hold them accountable for the crimes they committed that contradict local laws and international covenants.

Armed groups and entities also remain obligated to comply with the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights as long as they exercise a certain degree of control over a geographical area in which a population is present. They are also obligated not to violate what is required by local laws and not to commit crimes and violations, whether against each other or against the population.

Crimes and violations have been perpetrated notably in Taiz, which is controlled by the Yemeni government. The most prominent of these crimes were extrajudicial killings, whether through assassination, execution or attacks, as well as torture, inhuman treatment, enforced disappearance, land and real estate looting, resources looting, disturbing public peace, and attacks on public institutions, including medical ones. Most of these acts are described as grave and serious violations in international human rights law and domestic laws.

“One of the most important legal obligations that arise from violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law is to hold the perpetrators accountable... Respect for the rule of law requires that all persons, institutions and entities, including the state itself, are accountable to laws issued publicly, which are equally applied to all and are governed by an independent judiciary, and are consistent with international human rights norms and standards.”⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, the Yemeni government, and the local military, security, and civilian leaders in Taiz, are responsible for crimes committed by government forces, and by armed entities and groups to the extent that these entities, their leaders, and their members are responsible for what they have committed.

(1) United Nations Publications. International legal protection of human rights in armed conflict, issued by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner. New York and Geneva 2012. Page 73

STATISTICS

The statistics collect by the report for the period from May 2015 to December 2021 show that 823 people were killed during hostilities by assassination, liquidation, torture, and incidents of security deterioration, including (409) civilian victims, (396) soldiers, (12) members of extremist organizations and (6) fighters of the Houthi group. Among the civilian deaths, 59 children and 32 women were killed.

When it comes to assassination, "SAM" monitored the killing of (153), including (106) government recruits and (44) civilians, including (3) women and (3) persons affiliated with extremist organization. As for the parties accused of assassinating these people, the report monitored the killing of (110) that extremist organizations are accused of killing whereas gunmen in the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades are accused of killing (11) others. government soldiers are accused of killing (8) people and (5) people were killed at the hands of members of armed groups. The former deputy governor of Taiz, Mohammad Mansour Al-Shawafi was accused of organizing the murder of one civilian while the assassinations of (13) victims were against unknown people.

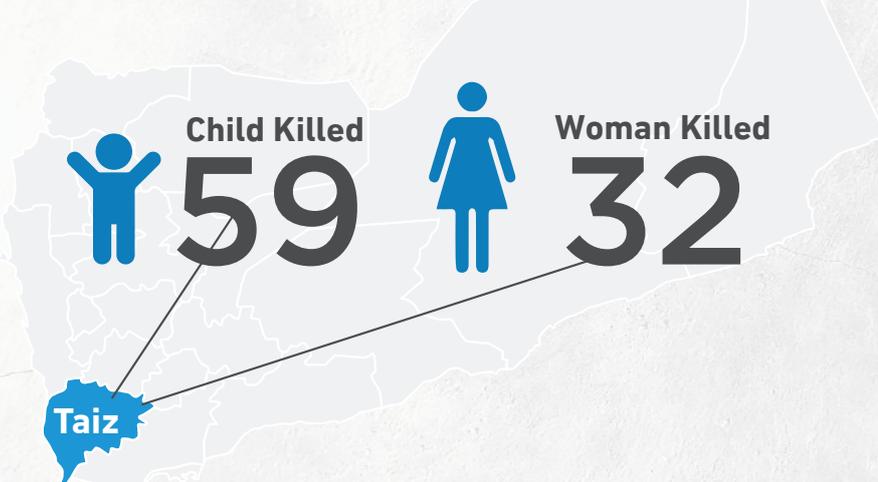
As for the victims of liquidation and unlawful execution, the organization has identified (67) victims, including (5) women. The extremist organizations are accused of liquidating (21) victims, and Abu Al-Abbas Brigade are accused of liquidating (18) victims while (8) others were executed by the government forces, the most prominent of which are the military police, Hasm Battalions, 22nd Brigade Mika, Special Security Forces and armed men in Al-Misrakh. The Popular Resistance was accused of executing (4) people whereas (3) others were executed by the forces of the 35th Armored Brigade and (4) victims that the organization couldn't verify the parties which carried out their execution.



The numbers collected by SAM for the period from May 2015 to December 2019 show that



including (409) civilians, (396) soldiers, (12) members of extremist organizations, and (6) fighters of the Houthi militia



The types of these violations details



explosive devices



armed clashes



torture



assassinations



criminal incidents



extralegal executions

The report recorded (15) victims killed as a result of torture and inhuman treatment, including two children and a woman. The families of the victims accuse the government forces (Taiz Axis Command, Military Intelligence, 17th Infantry Brigade) of being responsible for the death of (6) detainees while (3) detainees died in prison of Jabal Habashi Police and Al-Dhabab Police. The death of (2) detainees was recorded in the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades prison and the death of (2) detainees in prisons of extremist organizations while the death of one detainee was recorded in a prison belongs to the 35th Armored Brigade and the death of a woman due to torture at the hand of one of her relatives.

The report monitored the killing of (20) victims, including (6) civilians, by explosives planted in military vehicles or public streets. The Abu Al-Abbas Brigades are accused of killing (2) of them and the killing of the rest was recorded against unknown people believed to be extremist organizations.

The report monitored the killing of (567) people due to the fighting and the deteriorating security incidents. That includes (316) civilians, including (55) children, (22) women and (251) recruits and armed individuals. Among the total number, "SAM" recorded that (199) were killed due to the fighting between the forces, factions and armed groups while (358) were killed in incidents related to security deterioration and criminal incidents.

As for the wounded, their number reached (1224). That includes (668) civilians, including (142) children and (46) women. The rest are soldiers and fighters who were killed whether in armed clashes, security deterioration, criminal incidents, assassination attempt, or IED explosion.

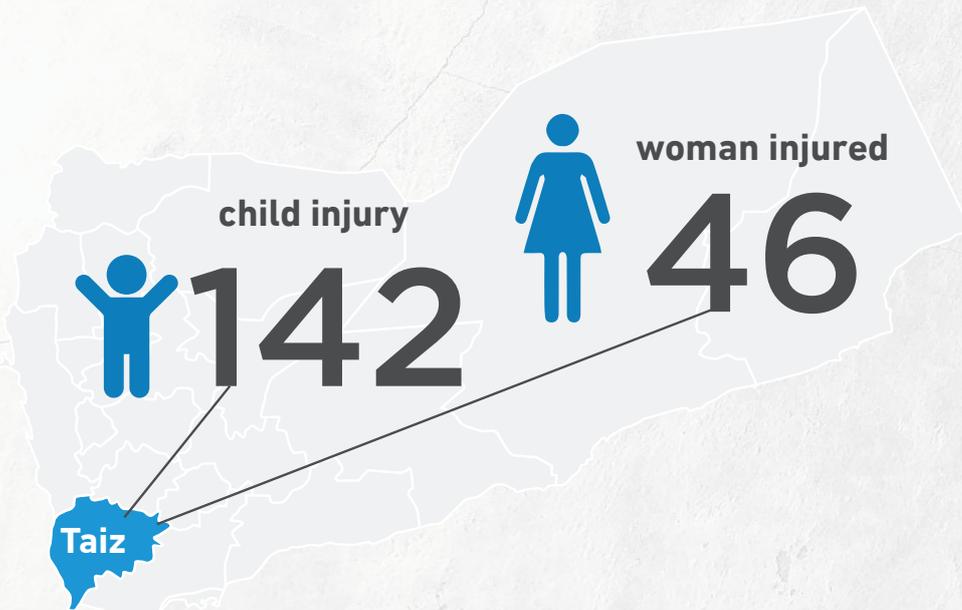
With regard to arbitrary detention, "SAM" monitored the detention of (269) victims, of whom (108) were recorded in the prisons of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, (78) in the prisons of the government military and security forces, (47) in the prisons of the 35th Armored Brigade and (13) are detained in the prisons of the extremist organization whereas (22) were recorded to be detained by unknown parties.

Regarding the wounded that SAM documented during the reporting period



1224

people were injured



and the remaining are soldiers and insurgents. Their injuries were resulted from clashes, or as a result of insecurity, criminal accidents, an assassination attempt, or the detonation of IEDs.

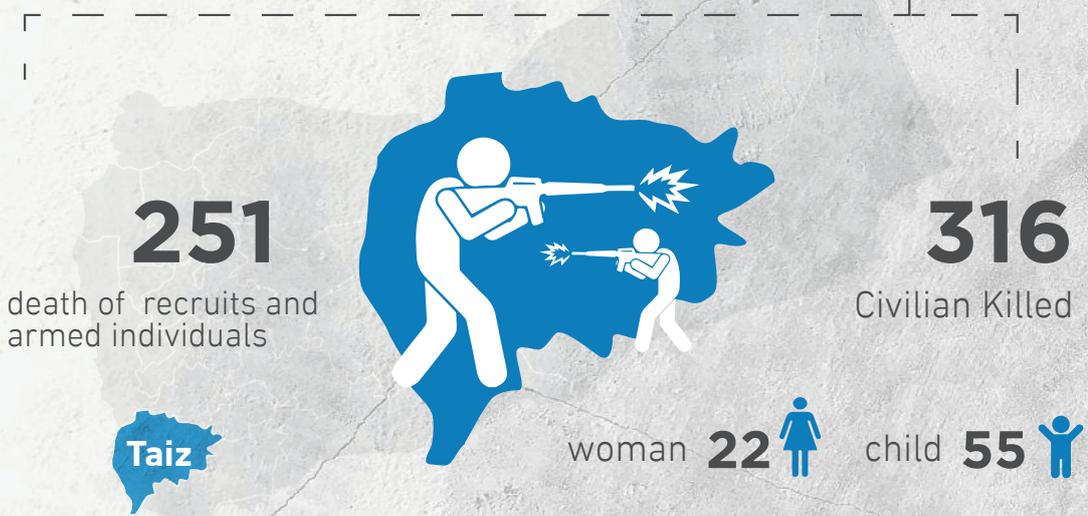
In regard to the victims of enforced disappearance, "SAM" monitored (32) victims, (9) of whom were released. The government forces are accused of disappearing (19) and they released (8) of them. The extremist organizations are accused of disappearing (7), one of whom has been revealed. The Abu Al-Abbas Brigades are accused of disappearing (3) whose fate remains unknown. The special forces are accused of disappearing one person while the family of one of the disappeared accuses the director of the Culture Office in Taiz, Abdul-Khaleq Saif, of helping to hide him. Also, there is a missing person and it is unknown who or which party responsible for his disappearance.

The report recorded (28) unofficial detention sites, of whom (21) persons were shut down, including (6) detention sites run by the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, (5) prisons belonged to 22nd Brigade Mika and one was in partnership with military intelligence. (5) other prisons were run by the extremist organizations, (3) prisons were run by the command of the Taiz Axis (3) and (3) other prisons were run by 35th Armored Brigade. (3) prisons were run by Hasm Battalions, one prison is run by the 17th Infantry Brigade, another prison run by the Security Committee and the administration of Taiz police and a third prison is run by the Political Security.

There are still (7) prisons where the freedom of persons is still held, including (2) prisons run by the 22nd Brigade Mika, (2) prisons run by the Taiz Axis, one prison run by the 17th Infantry Brigade, in addition to another prison run by the Political Security Organization and a third prison run by the 35th Armored Brigade.

567

SAM documented (567) deaths in the government-controlled areas in Taiz, attributed to the insecurity and criminal acts, including (316) civilians, (55) children and (22) women, in addition to (251) recruits and armed individuals.



40

people were killed due to clashes between armed factions and gangs, including Ghazwan al-Mikhlafi gang, Abd al-Rahman al-Ghadra, Saddam al-Maqlou, Issa al-Agouz, Hasm Brigades, and a gang affiliated with the director of the Al-Masrakh district, Yahya Ismail, clashed with a gang that affiliated to a relative of the former governor Amin Mahmoud, and other gangs

79

deaths due to clashes between government forces, and the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades and extremist organizations on the other hand, including

33

death of people by the government forces, some of them as a result of clashes at military sites and checkpoint

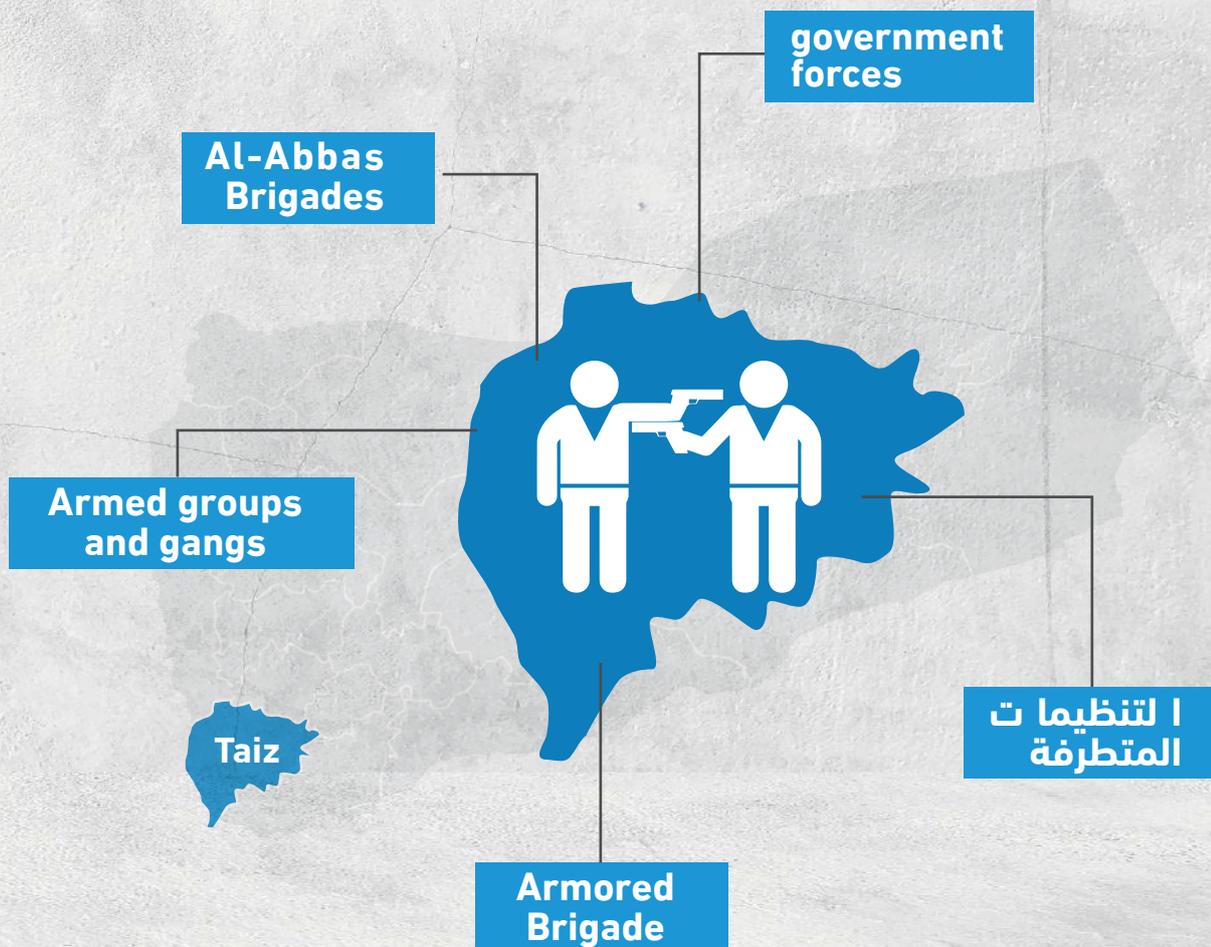
06

SAM also, documented that (6) people were killed by members of the 35th Armored Brigade.

368

people were killed due to the insecurity and criminal incidents in the areas affiliated with the Yemeni government in Taiz

SAM documented the injury of (511) people as a result of incidents attributed to insecurity, among them (321) civilians. Most of the incidents are either clashes, or thuggery and appropriating of lands and homes, or as a result of blocking of public roads and other accidents. The involved parties are government army recruits and recruits in the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades and the 35th Armored Brigade, or extremist organizations, armed factions, or gangs, entities, and unbridled militants.

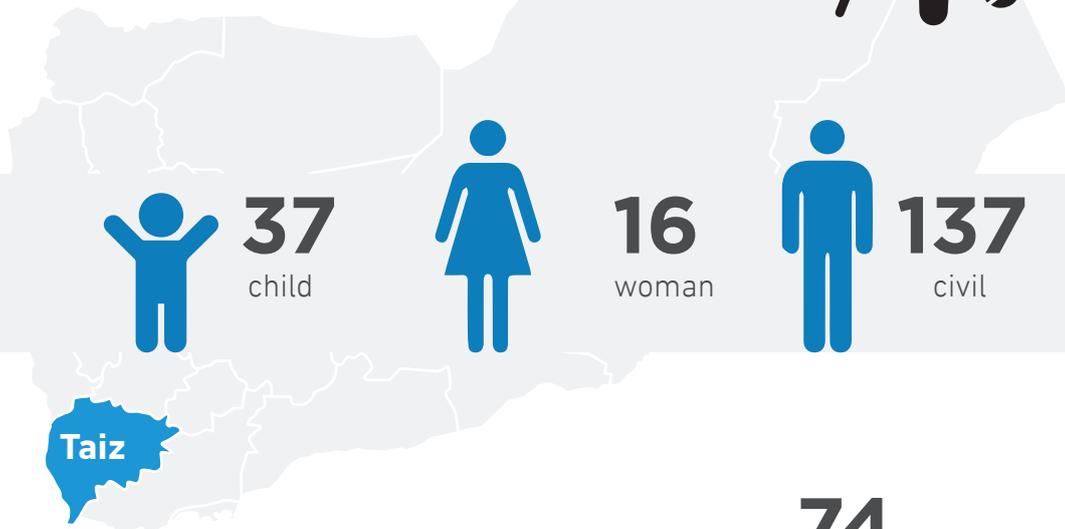


Meanwhile, 219 people were injured in criminal incidents, most of which were due to disputes among civilians, which often evolved due to the weakness and failure of the security services to perform their duties.

309



309 victims were injured in clashes between government forces on the one hand, Abu Abbas Brigades and extremist organizations



43

A victim due to the detonation of explosive devices, including (27) civilians and the rest are conscripts

74

Including (48) civilians in clashes between military factions and armed gangs

05

They were hit by unknown parties believed to be extremist organizations.

32

Among them are (19) civilians, in clashes between government military or security forces on the one hand, and armed gangs

15

Extremist organizations are accused of being responsible for their injuries

18

A victim of bullets by recruits of the 35th Armored Brigade



CHAPTER I: CONFLICTS WITNESSED BY TAIZ

This chapter includes the most prominent conflicts in Taiz from March 2015 to December 2021. These conflicts are mentioned to define the nature of the conflict, its inferences, and its impacts on the security and humanitarian situation in Taiz and also as an entry point to talk about the conflict among the government forces in Chapter II.

FIRST SECTION:

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE HOUTH GROUP (HOUTH GROUP) AND THE FORCES OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT SALEH

This conflict is the fiercest and the longest in Taiz and the root of all subsequent conflicts. It began in march 2015 with the group mobilizing its forces to Taiz and attacking the government's 35th Armored Brigade west of the city and taking control of its headquarters.

What is known as the popular resistance and the military council were formed with financial and logistical support from the Arab Coalition countries to confront the Houthi-Saleh alliance forces in order to prevent them from seizing Taiz. Thus, the conflict intensified, and these forces were able to withstand the forces of the Houthis and Saleh, which were equipped with huge military equipment.

The Houthi and Saleh forces locked Taiz up⁽¹⁾ and restricted the movement of residents and the transport of goods and supplies. Besides, they took control of the city of Mocha and the western, eastern and northern districts and a number of districts south of Taiz.⁽²⁾ The Houthi forces still block the main entrances to Taiz and obstruct the movement of people and supplies from it. Residents use an alternative, unpaved road that passes through rugged mountain heights, and it takes seven hours to walk from the city center to the east.

After the killing of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh at the hands of the Houthis in December 2017, the Houthi group became in control of the war decision and tries to take control of the government-held areas. The balance of military power has not changed in favor of either party while the conflict is still stagnating and intensifying from time to time. This conflict has resulted in harsh humanitarian conditions and led to the collapse of infrastructure and widespread destruction of state institutions and residential neighborhoods. the Houthi forces also committed crimes amounting to war crimes against the civilian population and civilian, health and cultural objects.

(1) See the report issued by SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties (Adduhai... Crossing to Death) <https://bit.ly/3b0fez5>

(2) The Houthi -Saleh forces took control of the districts of western Taiz, namely Mocha, Mawza, Al-Wazi'ah, Dhubab Al-Mandab and Maqbana, the districts of eastern Taiz, Mawiyah, Khadir and Haifan, the districts of northern Taiz, which are Al-Ta'izah, Shara' Al-Salam and Sha'ab Al-Runa, and the districts south of Taiz, which are Al-Silw and Samea. These forces lost the districts of Dhubab Al-Mandab, Mocha, Muwaza, and large parts of Al-Wazi'iyah in 2017 to UAE-backed forces.

SECOND SECTION:

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

With the collapse of security and civil institutions in Taiz as a result of the Houthi and Saleh forces attack on them, extremist elements infiltrated the city under the pretext of fighting the Houthis while the popular resistance was not able to prevent their infiltration. According to Abaad Studies and Research Center, these elements “found that the name of the Salafist resistance led by “Abu al-Abbas” and others a good cover that gave them an opportunity to follow and hide under it at the same time. Because of their combating experience they obtained and their ability to plan for battles, compared to youth who joined the resistance... Many young people were impressed by them and they gained the sympathy of many people. From that point, the process of winning new elements with enthusiasm and rush as they considered battles between Rafidites and Sunnis as religious, not political, because of the ideological feeding of Salafism from the beginning.”⁽³⁾

In August 2015, the popular resistance was able to push the Houthi and Saleh back from a number of neighborhoods east of the city, so extremist elements infiltrated into these neighborhoods and took public facilities as their headquarters. Later, they formed what was known as “Ansar Al-Sharia” branch of Taiz led by “Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Odani”, who established a Sharia court run by “Abu al-Bara” to adjudicate disputes between residents and it was based in Arwa School in Al-Mujalia neighborhood.

A number of the followers of this organizations split away and formed what is known as Islamic State Organization (ISIS), led by Hashem al-Sana’ani. After the announcement of his arrest by government forces, Bilal Al-Wafi,

(3) A special report by Abaad Studies and Research Center entitled the brutalization of terrorism in Yemen-the fragile war against Al-Qaeda (1), Page 73, October 2017
<https://abaadstudies.org/files.php?language=arabic>



nicknamed “Abu Al-Waleed”, took over the leadership of the organization⁽⁴⁾. Then Hareth Lutf Al-Ezzi⁽⁵⁾ joined them, and the organization established its own court in the building of Hayel Saeed Anam Associates Welfare Corporation.

These organizations have conspicuously practiced assassinations and liquidations of recruits and civilians, looting of private banks, and looting of electricity and communications network extensions, especially during the period from 2016 to the last third of 2018.

These practices of these organizations caused widespread public outrage, so local authorities and government forces in Taiz began to pursue them⁽⁶⁾ since August 2017 and increased the pace of their pursuit after the discovery of bodies in a secret graveyard in the intelligence neighborhood, which was then under the control of Ansar al-Sharia and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades.⁽⁷⁾

The battles between government forces and extremist organizations intensified in Al-Jumhuri and Al-Mujlia neighborhoods after the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades had intervened in the fighting alongside those organizations. In August 2018, the government forces announced the purification of those neighborhoods from what they described as lawless elements⁽⁸⁾ while the Abu Abbas Brigades simultaneously announced their withdrawal from the city of Taiz.⁽⁹⁾ The government forces also took control of the neighborhoods of Al Mujlia, Souk Al Samil, and Murabba Al Ardi and expelled extremist elements from them until the end of 2018.

“SAM” has noted a significant reduction in the crimes of assassinations and liquidations in the last three years after the defeat of extremist elements from Taiz and the control of government forces and the local authority over those areas, the normalization of public life in them and the rehabilitation of government facilities.

(4) he was arrested in October 2017

(5) Government forces announced his arrest in May 2019

(6) Akhbar Al-Yom. The dens of cells were raided in the Al-Jumhuri neighborhood. Taiz. A military campaign arrests two accused of carrying out the assassinations. 13 August 2017.
https://akhbaralyom-ye.net/news_details.php?sid=98245

(7) DEBRIEFER report: Lawless Taiz: rival factions slaughter each other
<https://debriefere.net/news-571.html>

(8) Yemen Monitor. The Yemeni army announces the purification of neighborhoods in Taiz from outlaws. August 26, 2018.

<http://www.yemenmonitor.com/Details/ArtMID/908/ArticleID/28264/userid/10>

(9) al-Quds Al-Arabi. Abu al-Abbas Salafist Brigades announces its withdrawal from the Yemeni city of Taiz. August 25, 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2CZ5kkT>

THIRD SECTION:

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE UAE-BACKED ABU AL-ABBAS BRIGADES

The Abu Al-Abbas Brigades are one of the battalions of the 35th Armored Brigade affiliated with the government forces. The brigades have come into a conflict with small armed groups supported in one way or another by military leaders since 2016, often because of the revenues from the city's markets. Soon, these clashes developed between the brigades and other military factions affiliated with the Taiz military Axis.

The fighting between the Taiz Axis Forces and the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades entered into a violent phase since late 2017 to the end of 2018. As the Taiz Axis accuses the brigades of supporting the outlaws (extremist organizations)⁽¹⁰⁾ while the brigades attribute the causes of this fighting to the influence of the Islah party over the decision of the axis. As a result, the two sides fought battles in the residential neighborhoods, and the Taiz Axis was able to gradually gain control of the areas under held by the brigades. The fighting ended in April 2019 with an agreement sponsored by the local authority, which stipulated that the Abu Abbas Brigades handed over the government buildings they controlled and removed fighters and weapons from the Old City to⁽¹¹⁾ the Kadah Front, west of Taiz.

“SAM” believes that the Emirati support for the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades is one of the causes of this conflict. Also, the positions and biases of the political parties have contributed to fueling it as it has been noted how the Islah party used media discourse of the Islah party to support the government forces whereas the Nasserist Party and a faction in the General People's Congress supported the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades in their media discourse.



FOURTH SECTION:

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT FORCES TAIZ AXIS AND THE 35TH ARMORED BRIGADE

After the withdrawal of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades from the city of Taiz, the conflict began to spread to the areas of Al-Hujariya and Al-Turbah city. Since the brigades are part of the structure of the 35th Armored Brigade, the conflict was reflected in the same brigade, which was led by Brigadier General Adnan Al Hammadi.

The manifestations of the conflict emerged with an inflammatory discourse between the political parties supporting the Taiz Axis on the one hand and the leadership of the 35th Armored Brigade on the other hand. This discourse turned into armed mobilization by both parties. After the killing of Brigadier General Al Hammadi in December 2019, the Yemeni President issued a decision appointing Brigadier General Abdul Rahman Al Shamsani as the commander of the 35th Armored Brigade. Officers affiliated with the brigade rejected the appointment decision, and the Taiz Axis took advantage of that refusal to impose its authority on the brigade's headquarters and the city of al-Turbah. Then Clashes erupted between dissident officers in the 35th Armored Brigade and local fighters on the one hand, and forces from the Taiz axis and other local fighters on the other hand in different areas of the Al-Hujariya districts. The Taiz Axis was able to control the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade and enable Al-Shamsani to perform his duties.



FIFTH SECTION:

CONFLICT OF THE GOVERNMENT FORCES WITH THE UAE-BACKED NATIONAL RESISTANCE ON THE WEST COAST

The liberation of the coastal city of Mocha and its port from the grip of the Houthi-Saleh forces coalition in January 2017 represented a turning point in the Yemeni conflict and in Taiz, ⁽¹²⁾ especially as the UAE-backed Al-Amalika “giants” forces, led by the Salafi cleric (Abu Zara’a al-Maharrami)⁽¹³⁾, took control of Mocha. The UAE also formed the “National Resistance” forces led by Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh, after the killing of former President Saleh at the hands of the Houthis.

The government forces and the local authority in the city of Taiz expressed their fear of the forces in Mocha, especially Tariq Saleh, who was fighting for a short period in the ranks of the Houthi forces. The former governor of Taiz, Ali Al-Maamari, stated that he wanted to visit the port of Mocha, but he was prevented by the Emirati forces present there. ⁽¹⁴⁾

(12) Sky News Arabia. The liberation of Mocha..a strategic shift for operations in Yemen. February 8, 2017. <https://bit.ly/3jjRDfX>

(13) Al-Amalika Brigades Media Center. Who are the Al-Amalika (giants) brigades, who founded them, and what are their achievements. October 20, 2018. <https://alamalika.net/site/2018/10/20/1378/>

(14) American University of Beirut. Included in the seminar “Paths of Conflict in Yemen and Opportunities for Peace”, organized by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs in cooperation with the Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies. Beirut October 16, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7PufFulfTg>

Media reports also spoke of signs of conflict between government forces and the forces in Mocha, and the UAE's attempt to separate Mocha from Taiz Governorate.⁽¹⁵⁾ The speeches of the leaders of the two parties emerged suspicious of each other, and Tariq Saleh, the leader of the national resistance, said: "We do not want to be dragged into other battles as they claim and as they want and what the media is saying and talking about Taiz, Al-Hujariya and Shabwa...and instead of liberating Al-Hawban they go back to fight the liberated areas."⁽¹⁶⁾ The commander of the Taiz Axis stated: "It is not possible under any circumstance to ignore these disputes that occur on the coast of Taiz, or for the combatants there to think that the axis turns a blind eye to what they aspire to. The axis is responsible for every inch of Taiz along its soil and can never be forfeited."⁽¹⁷⁾

The two sides began absorbing the manifestations of the conflict by rapprochement and exchanging visits in the framework of what they consider military coordination to confront the Houthi forces, their common enemy. The appointment of Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh as a member of the Leadership Council had a significant impact on the decline of manifestations of conflict between the government forces in Taiz and the national resistance forces on the West Coast.

(15) Al-Khaleej Online. increasing incursion into Yemen .. What is the UAE's goal in separating Mocha from Taiz? November 27, 2019.

<https://bit.ly/32twRn2>

(16) Yemen Today TV Channel. Brigadier General Tariq Muhammad Saleh: Our guns will only be pointed at Al-Houthi, and Al-Hodeidah is coming. August 25, 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xPuXXR3ztg>

(17) Yemen Shabab Net. Commander of the Taiz Axis: What is happening in the Coast "Sahel" cannot be overlooked, and we will not turn a blind eye. December 31, 2019.

SIXTH SECTION:

CONFLICT AMONG THE ARMED GROUPS

Since the end of 2016, the Yemeni government has begun merging what is known as the popular resistance and armed factions with the military and security forces, so the government absorbed influential figures who fought against the Houthi and Saleh forces. This absorption had a negative impact on the government forces as influential people formed armed gangs that began fighting to seize public revenues, lands, and real estate.

Extremist organizations, gangs and other personalities fueled by local parties and intelligence services have also emerged, taking advantage of the deteriorating situation in Taiz. A report published by the British newspaper The Guardian revealed that the United Arab Emirates took advantage of the chaos of the war in Yemen to create its own army.⁽¹⁸⁾ The report added: "In Taiz...the fighters on the coalition side are split into more than two dozen separate military factions – including local militias backed and sponsored by the UAE, as well as al-Qaida and other jihadis. Some fighters switch sides according to who is offering funds."⁽¹⁹⁾

Although the government forces were able to defeat the extremist organizations and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades from the city of Taiz, they seemed unable to combat the armed gangs, and at times they seemed lax, which reinforced the accusations that the leaders and members of these gangs belonged to them, and a number of them relied on leaders in these forces.⁽²⁰⁾ The organization recorded incidents of fighting between these gangs and reprisal and revenge against some of them, as well as extrajudicial killings and destabilization resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.

(18) The Guardian. Yemen on the brink: how the UAE is profiting from the chaos of civil war. Fri 21 Dec 2018. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad .
<https://bit.ly/34wvuGU>

(19) Al-Mawqaea Post.net. The Guardian Report Yemen on the brink: how the UAE is profiting from the chaos of civil war (translated) 22 December 2018
<https://almawqaeapost.net/translation/36800>

(20) Almushahid. Wanted security men in Taiz... just words on paper. February 24 2022
<https://almushahid.net/92674/>

SEVENTH SECTION:

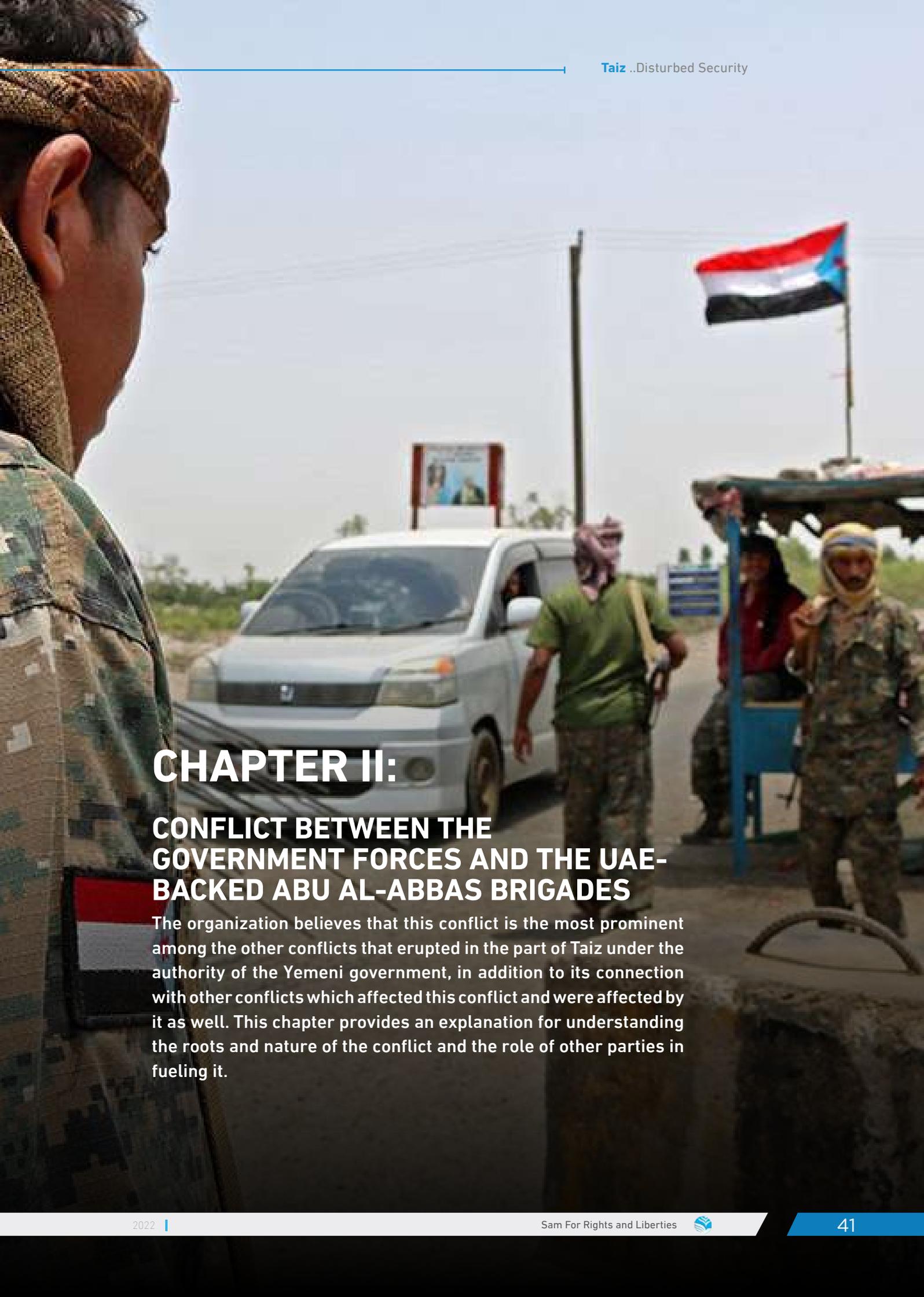
CONFLICT BETWEEN THE HOUTHİ GROUP AND LOCALS IN AREAS UNDER THE GROUP CONTROL

The organization monitored armed clashes in the areas of influence of the Houthi group between its forces on the one hand, and local residents on the other, as the group used excessive force to quell any rebellion movements and quickly eliminated them since the Houthi group has huge capabilities in facing the simple capabilities of the local population.

The most prominent of these clashes took place between the group's forces and local residents in the "Al-Haymah Al-Olaya" areas, east of Taiz in late 2017 and lasted for nearly two months. During the period of the conflict, most of the population was forced to flee, and the Houthi forces managed to storm these areas where they practiced acts of abuse against the local leaders who led the fighting.⁽²¹⁾

"SAM" followed up the fighting that broke out in February 2019 between the Houthi forces and a group of gunmen in the "Al-Zarari" area, west of Taiz, and the group was able to raid the area and arrest the leaders of the gunmen. The Houthi media claimed that the gunmen belonged to Al-Qaeda, but the organization was unable to verify these allegations from impartial sources.





CHAPTER II: CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE UAE- BACKED ABU AL-ABBAS BRIGADES

The organization believes that this conflict is the most prominent among the other conflicts that erupted in the part of Taiz under the authority of the Yemeni government, in addition to its connection with other conflicts which affected this conflict and were affected by it as well. This chapter provides an explanation for understanding the roots and nature of the conflict and the role of other parties in fueling it.

FIRST SECTION:

DESCRIPTION AND NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

“SAM” has obtained information, through which it was able to describe the nature of the conflict between the forces of the Taiz Axis and the government forces of the Abu Abbas Brigades as the brigades took control of important facilities such as the Cairo Castle and the building of the Political Security after the Houthi forces were defeated. The brigades also extended its influence over entire neighborhoods in the southern and eastern part of the city and exercised the core functions of government offices, establishing a Sharia court and its own police stations.

The desire to control the revenues of the city’s markets was a catalyst for fighting between the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, small armed groups⁽¹⁾ and military factions such as the Al-Salik Brigade and Al-Tulab Brigade⁽²⁾, which receive support in one way or another from the Taiz Axis, so in 2017 the city witnessed intermittent clashes between the two parties.⁽³⁾

The refusal of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades to receive orders from the Taiz Axis or even from the 35th Armored Brigade, which the brigades follow, was one of the drives of this conflict. The commander of the 35th Armored Brigade mentioned in a press interview: “The Abu al-Abbas Brigades... are affiliated with the 35th Armored Brigade, but so far it has not been fully integrated into the 35th Brigade. They are within the Brigade in salaries but independent in their decisions, leadership and support.”⁽⁴⁾

The Taiz Axis attributed the cause of the conflict between its forces and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades to many factors, and the brigade stated in their response to the organization’s letter: “The security services, in the performance of their duties, pursued the outlaw elements, their supporters, and the rebels who raised their weapons against the security campaign under the cover of the Abu al-Abbas Brigade, which were formed as gangs practicing all forms of chaos, disturbing

(1) Including the Ghazwan Al-Mikhlafi group, who is close to the former commander of the 22nd Brigade Mika Sadiq Sarhan, and the Director of the Political Security Agency, Abdul Wahed Sarhan.

(2) They were later incorporated into the 22nd Brigade Mika

(3) Arabi 21. One person killed and more than six injured in bloody confrontations in Taiz, Yemen. November 25, 2017.

<https://bit.ly/3aWxg5x>

(4) Al-Mawqea Post. In an interview with Adnan al-Hammadi: We do not implement any foreign agenda, and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades have not been fully integrated into the 35th Brigade (2-2). October 23, 2017. <https://almawqea.com/interviews/24252>

public tranquility, rebellion against state institutions, creating Security imbalances, dealing in isolation from the decisions and directives of the local authority leadership in the governorate, and committing many crimes of public danger and state security crimes.”

“SAM” has monitored media positions published by the Abu al-Abbas Brigades that attributed the roots of the conflict to the fact that the Taiz Axis is run by the Islah party whereas the Taiz Axis responded to that by saying: “There is no truth to what is being circulated in this regard, which has become the subject of many people who seek to demonize the national army and downgrade its heroic and striving role in order to serve the enemy.”⁽⁵⁾

The conflict between the forces of the Taiz Axis and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades ended with the first taking control of the second's areas of influence and the brigades' departure with their equipment and many of their members to the rural area of al-Kadaha and then to the West Coast, where the brigades' recruits joined the UAE-backed Republican Guard forces.



(5) From their response to the letter sent to the organization.

SECOND SECTION:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMAND OF THE ABU AL-ABBAS BRIGADES AND THE EXTREMIST GROUPS

“SAM” noticed the penetration of extremist organizations into the neighborhoods controlled by the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades. As a result, assassinations and extrajudicial killings spread there. “SAM” documented incidents in which extremist elements and leaders of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades participated. The harmony between the brigades and the extremist elements was evident when the brigades announced in October 2017 the handover of (21) government buildings to the local authority.⁽⁶⁾ The organization had documented the extremist organizations’ use of a number of these buildings as their headquarters.

During the investigation into a number of human rights violations, “SAM” concluded that “Adel Al-Ezzi”, the deputy commander of the brigades, was the linking point between the brigades and “Abu Al-Bara,” the judge of what is known as Ansar al-Sharia, Bilal Ali al-Wafi “Abu al-Walid,” the leader of the so-called Islamic State “ISIS” in Taiz, and Hareth al-Ezzi, one of the leaders who moved between these extremist organizations. It also concluded that there is a relationship between some individuals in the brigades and extremist elements, and their participation in planning and committing a number of assassinations and extrajudicial killings.

The designation of “Adel Abdo Farea” Commander of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades as a terrorist group supporter by the United States of America and Gulf States confused the brigades and their supporters. The decision gave the Taiz Axis a justification to fight the brigades. It also accelerated their acceptance of their exit from the city of Taiz and their integration into the Republic’s Guards forces.

The organization had inquired into the command of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades about a number of information and incidents and their relationship to extremist organizations, but it did not receive a response until the issuance of the report.

(6) Akhbar Al-Youm. Abu al-Abbas Brigades announces its readiness to hand over 21 government facilities to the local authorities in Taiz. October 18, 2017
https://akhbaralyom-ye.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=99801

THIRD SECTION:

THE ROLE OF THE UAE IN THE CONFLICT

The report recorded government positions and conveyed information announced by the Group of Eminent Experts, revealing the brigades' relationship with the UAE and the role of the latter in fueling the conflict. Ali al-Maamari, the former governor of Taiz, stated that the UAE deals directly with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and supports its leader personally.⁽⁷⁾

Abdul Aziz Jubari, advisor to the Yemeni president and deputy speaker of parliament, referred to this relationship, describing the Abu Abbas Brigades as: "Do not fully submit to the brigade they are affiliated with, and that he received instruction through a memorandum from the Emirati envoy in Aden regarding the buildings that Abu Al-Abbas promised to hand over in Taiz. This memorandum indicates that it was not permissible to hand over these buildings and that the matter should have remained the same."⁽⁸⁾

In a report issued by the UN Security Council on Yemen, the Panel of Experts on Yemen confirmed that: "The Abu Abbas Brigades, and to a lesser extent, the 35th Brigade, receive support from the United Arab Emirates."⁽⁹⁾

"SAM" has monitored evidence of the Abu Abbas Brigades receiving military, logistical and media support from the United Arab Emirates. The organization believes that the Emirati support for the Abu al-Abbas Brigades facilitated the process of polarizing them, in the context of the Emirati position on the Islah party, which the UAE considers to be in control of the government forces' decision in Taiz.



(7) Ali al-Maamari, University of Beirut, included in the summary of the report on Yemen: "Opportunities for Peace", prepared by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs in cooperation with the Sanala Center for Strategic Studies, Beirut, 2017, <https://www.issamfares.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-07-17-Report-on-Yemen.pdf>

(8) Interview with the author, Mr. Abdul Aziz Jubari, Deputy Prime Minister, Araf Al-Azami, interview, December 6, 2017.

(9) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbUmctYu0r0>

(9) Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen, S/2020/70, page 8 <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/resolutions/2140/panel-of-experts/>

CHAPTER III: REACHING ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE

The report devoted this chapter to revealing the influencers and those associated with the conflict, as well as the direct perpetrators of violations, individuals and entities, with the aim of exposing them and bringing them to criminal justice. It also examined the reasons that impeded the achievement of justice and accountability.

FIRST SECTION:

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONFLICT AND VIOLATIONS

The organization made an effort to reach those responsible for the conflict and violations in Taiz. Despite the difficulty of this, it was able to obtain many of them, so they were divided into two parts:

The first section focused on government officials in Taiz who are related to the conflict, and the second section presented the most prominent parties and personalities who committed crimes and contributed to the deterioration of security and the multiplication of human rights violations.

FIRST SECTION: MILITARY, SECURITY AND CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Ali Muhammad Al-Maamari⁽¹⁾, the former governor of Taiz: Although he spent most of his appointment time outside the governorate to follow up on tasks and benefits related to employees, security services and local institutions, according to the man's media statements, the city witnessed fighting between armed groups and factions, resulting in deaths and injuries, and looting of public revenues from powerful entities and personalities during his tenure. The man, by virtue of his powers, is considered primarily responsible for security, protection of human rights, and preservation of public and private funds and properties.

Yousef Ali Al-Sheraji, former commander of the Taiz Axis: He continued in his position for seven months⁽²⁾. During his tenure, the city of Taiz witnessed violence and fighting between armed elements affiliated to the government forces and the popular resistance, which competed to collect market revenues, resulting in civilian casualties. Al-Sheraji is considered responsible for the actions of armed formations and their elements in accordance with the norms of international humanitarian law and domestic law.

Amin Ahmed Mahmoud, former governor of Taiz⁽³⁾: He remarkably settled in the city, and his tenure witnessed fighting between the security committee he headed on the one hand, and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and members of extremist organizations on the other. The man is considered responsible for the violations committed by the forces of government security committee and the casualties among civilians. He was also accused ⁽⁴⁾of supporting the Abu al-Abbas Brigades allied with extremist organizations.

(1) He was appointed on 17 January 2016 and removed on December 24, 2017

(2) He was appointed on January 15, 2016 and removed on August 3, 2016

(3) He was appointed on December 24, 2017 and removed on December 31, 2018

(4) Private Source

“SAM” inquired in its letter to Mr. Amin Mahmoud about the truth of the accusations against him, and he replied: “Accusing Abdo Farhan Salem and the Islah Party of spreading these lies, and he said that he allied himself and stood with the gun that was directed to fight the Houthis.” Mahmoud and the commander of the Taiz Axis, Khaled Fadel, were dismissed due to differences believed to have caused their incompatibility while managing the security files in Taiz.



Khaled Qasem Fadel, Commander of the Taiz Axis for two terms⁽⁵⁾: His tenure witnessed the fiercest combat operations between the government forces he runs on the one hand, and the extremist organizations and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades on the other. Clashes and bloody security incidents also took place between gangs, armed groups and military leaders due to the acquisition of resources and the looting of lands and homes. The man is considered responsible for violations committed by government forces and responsible for the actions of a number of leaders of armed gangs whose members belong to government forces.

(5) He was appointed on 3 August 2016 and removed on 31 December 2018. Reappointed in November 2019, he remains in his position till the issuance of this report.

The report also recorded crimes related to enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment in prisons owned by his military forces without judicial oversight.⁽⁶⁾ Affiliates of his forces committed a number of liquidation crimes during his leadership of the Taiz Axis. Moreover, his forces committed attacks on civilians in their fight against the Abu Abbas Brigades and extremist organizations in the center of the city of Taiz and other attacks while his forces fought against dissidents in the 35th Armored Brigade and armed groups loyal to them. "SAM" sent him a letter inquiring about the information and results it obtained in a number of incidents and cases. He sent a response that included his explanations for some of the issues.

Sameer Abdullah Al-Sabri, former commander of the Taiz Axis⁽⁷⁾: His tenure was heated with the fighting in the city of Taiz between government forces on the one hand and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades on the other. The report documented the deaths of a number of civilians due to armed attacks between the two parties. The forces of both sides also practiced arbitrary detention of supporters of the other side. His tenure witnessed significant looting of homes and private properties by influential people and leaders of armed groups linked to government forces.

Nabil Abdo Shamsan, Governor of Taiz⁽⁸⁾. Despite the rarity of his presence inside the city, he is responsible by virtue of his authority, for the violations committed during the conflict between government forces and the Abu Abbas Brigades in the first months of 2019, as well as the security deterioration in the governorate, and the spread of armed gangs in the city and the al-Turbah area, in addition to the spread of armed gangs in the city and area of Al-Turbah.

"SAM" inquired in a letter to the governor about the reasons for the spread of gangs and armed groups, the noticeable deterioration in security, and the measures he took to hold these gangs accountable, but he did not respond to the letter.

Abdo Farhan Salem, an advisor to the commander of the Taiz Axis, is believed to have a great influence on decision-making within the government forces. He had participated from his position as a leader in the Islah party in the fight against the Houthis during what is known as popular resistance. After his appointment, he worked to manage the combat operations against the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and extremist organizations. The man, by virtue of his position and influence within the government forces, is considered

(6) Most notably, the former Al-Nahda School prison, the Public Funds Prosecution building, the National Institute for Administrative Sciences building, and the Sheba School building (the headquarters of the Taiz axis).

(7) He was appointed on December 31, 2018 and dismissed in early November 2019

(8) He was appointed on December 31, 2018 and still in his position

responsible for civilian casualties due to the fighting and responsible for the actions of a number of faction leaders and influential people affiliated with government forces who are accused of committing murders and burglaries of private homes, opponents accuse him of being responsible for detaining a number of victims and has direct authority over the management of those prisons affiliated with the Taiz Axis forces.

Muhammad Abdullah al-Mahmudi and Mansour Abd al-Rab al-Akhali⁽⁹⁾, respectively appointed to lead the Taiz Police. The police force, with the participation of the military forces, committed human rights violations during their fight against extremist organizations and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, and members of the police practiced a number of crimes independently. The police and its units are also responsible for the crimes committed by armed gangs against the population, due to their failure to protect them, and the two men by virtue of their position are responsible for police actions. The organization directed inquiries to the Taiz Police Command, through the Assistant Director of Police, Adnan Al-Saqqaf, about what it took in a number of incidents and the measures it took to protect the

population and the spread of crime, but the Taiz Police did not respond to the organization.

Sadiq Ali Sarhan, the former commander of the 22nd Brigade Mika, and previously served as a member of the Military Council in Taiz. "SAM" concluded his responsibility for managing a number of private prisons, including the prison of Taiz Tourist Club, and the prison of the National Institute of Administrative Sciences. The report obtained testimonies that the brigade concealed a number of victims and mistreated detainees. The man attempted to cover up figures close to him accused of committing crimes and violations against the population. "SAM" asked him for an explanation of a number of issues and the information it obtained, and it received an unofficial response from one of his close associates, in which he denied the responsibility of the brigade and its commander for the enforced disappearances, and denied the existence of prisons affiliated with the brigade, as well as rejecting accusations of covering up influential figures and leaders of armed gangs.

Adnan Muhammed Al-Hammadi, former commander of 35th Armored Brigade: He was assassinated at his home in early

(9) The first was appointed on 28 December 2017 and removed on January 15, 2018 and Mansour Al-Akhali replaced him and he is still in his position till the release of this report.

December 2019 under mysterious circumstances.⁽¹⁰⁾ He is responsible, ex officio, for the crimes committed by the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades since they are affiliated to the 35th brigade. "SAM" recorded acts of detention and ill-treatment in the brigade's prisons. Also, the recruits practiced human rights violations in the areas under the Brigade's control in the southern countryside of Taiz. According to testimonies, the former leaders, Muhammad Shamsan Al-Jaradi, the security official in the brigade, and Raed Saif Al-Hajj, the deputy intelligence official in the brigade, are linked to the arrests and inhumane treatment. Although the organization sent a letter to Abd al-Malik al-Ahdal, Chief of Staff of the Brigade, inquiring about the incidents that the brigade and its recruits are accused of committing, it did not receive a response from him.

Adel Abdo Farea Al-Dhubhani (Abu Al-Abbas), commander of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades: "SAM" documented the participation of leaders and members of his brigades in assassinations and liquidations of recruits and civilians and the commission of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and the management of private prisons. It was also recorded that the brigades committed

attacks during their fight against government forces that resulted in civilian casualties and other attacks in their fight against armed factions and groups due to the collection of financial revenues. "SAM" sent a letter to the brigades through two of their media workers, which included a number of inquiries, but did not receive a response.

Abdulaziz Al-Majidi, the chief of staff of the Taiz Axis⁽¹¹⁾ and a former commander of the 170th Air Defense Brigade: responsible, ex officio, for crimes committed by government forces while fighting other government forces and armed gangs. He is also responsible, by virtue of his command of the 170th Brigade, for the actions of a number of the brigade's officers and the violations they committed, including physical liquidation. The report documented the involvement of soldiers in the brigade within armed gangs that practiced acts of chaos and committed violations against the population and occupied private and public facilities.

Abdul-Rahman al-Shamsani, commander of the 35th Armored Brigade and former commander of the 17th Infantry Brigade. Together with his deputy, Abdo Hammoud al-Saghir, who has great influence in the 17th Brigade, are responsible for the detention and disappearance

(10) Balqis channel. Al-Hammadi... the commander of the first shot and the fence on which the Houthis' ambitions were crushed. December 3, 2019

(11) He was appointed in May 2018 and he's still in his position

of a number of people in the Brigade prison, in addition to their responsibility for recruits who participated within armed gangs in killing civilians, insecurity and blocking public roads. Al-Shamsani, after being appointed commander of the 35th Armored Brigade, also claimed to fight against dissidents in the brigade and to commit human rights violations.

Abdul Wahed Ali Sarhan, Director of the Political Security Apparatus⁽¹²⁾: Sarhan used his position to cover up influential and gang leaders who looted homes, real estate, and market proceeds, fought with other armed gangs, and committed human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings. The man, according to testimonies, is also responsible for the arbitrary detention of victims in the Political Security prison. The organization sent him inquiries about a number of the incidents it documented, but it did not receive a response to its letter.

Jamil Aqlan al-Qadasi, commander of the Special Forces in Taiz: "SAM" documented cases of arbitrary detention committed by his forces in one of their prisons, as well as the commission of extrajudicial killings. The organization inquired of the man about the incidents committed by his forces, but its letter was not answered.

Deputy governors of Taiz, Abdul Qawi Al-Mikhlafi, Aref Jamel, Rashad Al-Akhali, and Abdul Karim Al-Sabri, are responsible by virtue of their authority and influence for the violations committed by the security services. The report documented their association with armed parties and factions that violated human rights. The first and second are connected to the leaders of armed groups that fought for public revenues and looting of homes, while the third is connected to and influence on the leadership of the Abu Abbas Brigades and participated in the detention of a humanitarian activist whereas the fourth is directly linked to the military forces and is responsible by virtue of the decision of his appointment for the violations these forces committed.

(12) He was appointed on May 24, 2016 and he is still in his position

SECOND SECTION:

ENTITIES, FACTIONS, ARMED GANGS AND INFLUENTIAL FIGURES

Al-Qaeda Organization (Ansar al-Sharia), Taiz branch, was led by Abdul-Rahman Haza'a Ahmed al-Azab, nicknamed "Abu Abdul-Rahman al-Adani"⁽¹³⁾ and "Abu al-Bara," who worked as a judge for the organization and used the Arwa school building as a special court.⁽¹⁴⁾ Hareth Lutf Al-Ezzi⁽¹⁵⁾ was a leader in the organization before his defection and others and the formation of what was known as the "Hazm Brigade", which was in coordination with the Islamic State "ISIS". The report documented that the members of this organization committed liquidation and assassination of recruits and citizens and tortured detainees in their prisons. Information confirmed the association of Abu Al-Bara and Hareth Lutf Al-Ezzi with leaders in the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades.

The Islamic State organization "ISIS" was led by Bilal Ali Al-Wafi, nicknamed "Abu Al-Waleed"⁽¹⁶⁾, after the arrest of the former leader, Hashem Al-Sana'ani⁽¹⁷⁾. The most prominent figure in it is Hammam al-Sana'ani⁽¹⁸⁾. The members of this faction defected from Ansar al-Sharia in Taiz. The report documented that member of this group have carried out assassinations and liquidations of recruits and civilians, and they are accused of planting explosive devices in security pickups and public markets. The organization ran private prisons in which inhumane acts were practiced against detainees before they were closed by the government forces.

"SAM" asked the leadership of the Taiz Axis about the measures they had taken to achieve accountability against Bilal Ali Al-Wafi, and they replied that this matter is the responsibility of the security authorities. "SAM" obtained information that Bilal Al-Wafi "Abu Al-Waleed" is still in their custody, and it is their duty to refer him to the judicial authorities in order to achieve accountability.

The Abu al-Abbas Brigades, led by Adel Abdo Farea al-Dhubhani, and his deputy was Adel al-Ezzi, and Mu'min Abdullah al-Mikhlaifi, appointed in 2018 as a second deputy. A number of personalities emerged in the brigades, including Muhammad Najib Rushdi, commander of operations and control in

(13) His fate is unknown. some media reported his death in August 2016 while fighting Houthi forces. Other media reported the news of surrendering himself in July 2016 to the Lahj Governorate Police

(14) Some media outlets reported that he left the city of Taiz in October 2017 after security campaigns launched by government forces against extremist organizations

(15) His fate remains unknown. some media outlets mentioned that he fled Taiz to Houthi- controlled areas

(16) He was arrested by the government forces in May 2019. His fate after his arrest remains unknown

(17) Sputnik Agency Arabic. The Yemeni army arrested the prince of "ISIS" in Taiz. October 23, 2017. <https://bit.ly/3aXCpdC>

(18) Taiz police announced his arrest in November 2018. Source: Yemen Shabab Channel - an interview with the Taiz Police Director. November 26, 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_PVFy403pY

the brigades⁽¹⁹⁾, Nadim al-Sana'ani, commander of the 7th sector⁽²⁰⁾, and Alaa al-Ezzi, a former commander in the Al-Kadha Front⁽²¹⁾. The report verified their relationship with Ansar al-Sharia and ISIS elements, participating in assassinations and liquidation of government soldiers and citizens, and participating together in fighting government forces. The brigades owned private prisons where torture of detainees was recorded, and they committed attacks in their fight against government forces and armed groups that caused civilian casualties.

The Hasm Brigade, led by Adnan Ruzaiq⁽²²⁾ and Ammar al-Jandbi⁽²³⁾ before its members were integrated into the 5th Presidential Protection Brigade in Taiz. The report recorded extrajudicial killings committed by members of the brigades, the arbitrary detention of civilians in private prisons, the participation of members of the brigades in robberies of shops in the city center on the pretext that they belong to the Houthi group, and the robbery of civilian equipment belonging to private and public institutions.

The Al-Saalik Brigade was led by Azzam Al-Farhan⁽²⁴⁾, Al-Hussein bin Ali, and Saad Al-Qumairi, before its members were integrated into the 22nd Brigade Mika. The report verified acts of detention, enforced disappearance, and mistreatment of victims in a private prison inside the building of Central Authority for Control and Accountancy. This faction caused civilian casualties during its fight against the Abu al-Abbas Brigades in 2017, and its leaders were accused of robbing the homes of civilian residents.

Bakr Sadiq Sarhan and Essam al-Sagheer (Abu Muhammad) are leaders in the 22nd Brigade Mika. The first leads the Reserve Battalion in the 22nd Brigade Mika. He used his influence and that of his father, the former commander of the brigade, to loot the lands and homes of civilian residents. He also participated in the physical liquidation of a merchant. The second is accused of detaining and disappearing a number of civilians, including soldier Akram Hameed.

The tribal Sheikh Hamoud Saeed Al-Mikhlafi: He chaired the Popular Resistance Coordination Council. The report documented violations committed by the popular resistance, including arbitrary detention and inhumane treatment in a prison inside the Bakathir School. The man left the city in March 2016, It is believed that the man is still having a power and influence remain on

(19) He was dismissed in late October 2018, and Abdo Al-Harq was appointed in his place

(20) He was killed in February 2018 by a security force after raiding his apartment in the city of Aden

(21) The members of the battalions joined the Republic's Guards forces led by Tariq Saleh on the West Coast after they had been expelled by government forces in the city of Taiz.

(22) In November 2017, he was appointed commander of the 5 Presidential Guard Brigade in Taiz

(23) He is currently serving as the Chief of Staff of the 5th Presidential Guard Brigade

(24) Son of Abdo Farhan Salem, advisor to the command of the Taiz axis

personalities who contributed to the deterioration of security and practiced violations. In August 2019, the man called on the youth of Taiz who fight in the southern border of Saudi Arabia to return and worked to gather them and set up a recruitment camp for them in the “Yafrus” area, south of the city. He posted on his Facebook page a video of thousands of recruits returning from the southern border of Saudi Arabia who responded to his call, according to his description.⁽²⁵⁾

Ghazwan Ali Mansour Al-Mikhlafi and his brother Suhaib are recruits in the 22nd Brigade Mika. They led an armed gang that stole the revenues of some of the city’s markets. Because of these revenues, they fought with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and other armed gangs in the years 2017 and 2016. The security services were unable to confront them; consequently, there were civilian casualties and private property was destroyed. The two men actively contributed to the deterioration of security in Taiz and obtained the support and complicity of the former commander of the 22nd Brigade Mika, his son Bakr Sadiq Sarhan, and the director of the Political Security Apparatus, Abdul-Wahed Sarhan. After media and human rights pressures, the Taiz police announced the arrest of Ghazwan Al-Mikhlafi in August

2020, and his detention in a reserve prison in Taiz, while his brother and the rest of his gang are still far from being held accountable.

Abdul-Rahman Radman Farhan, nicknamed “Al-Ghadr”, affiliates to the 22nd Brigade Mika. He led an armed gang that fought against other armed gangs, causing civilian casualties. His armed gang also committed killings and physical liquidations and contributed to the deterioration of security in the city. The security services were unable to hold him accountable. The report obtained information that he left the city of Taiz for the West Coast after being pursued by another armed gang.

Shawqi Saeed Al-Mikhlafi, a centrist leader in what was known as the popular resistance, Khattab Abdullah Al-Yasiri, commander of the first battalion in the 170th Air Defense Brigade, and Hammam Marei, commander of the third battalion. These people used their influence and government military equipment to rob the lands and homes of local residents. Also, the first is responsible for gathering fighters returning from the southern border of Saudi Arabia after being invited by his brother, Sheikh Hamoud Al-Mikhlafi. According to incidents documented by the organization, the second and third

(25) His Facebook page, 7 December 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/hamoodsaeed20>

owned armed gangs that clashed with other gangs, resulting in civilian casualties. Al-Yasiri stormed Al-Thawra Hospital and liquidated one of the wounded who received care there.

Saddam Ali Farhan, nicknamed (Al-Maqlua), is a security officer of the 170th Air Defense Brigade⁽²⁶⁾, and Arafat al-Sufi is a company commander in the same brigade. The two are linked to military figures in the Taiz Axis. The report documented that the two men looted public property and burgled private homes. Each one has an armed gang that has contributed to the deterioration of security by fighting other gangs to collect the revenues of some markets.

Hamoud Khaled Al-Sufi resides outside Yemen. He worked previously as head of the Political Security Agency in Yemen.⁽²⁷⁾ “SAM” obtained information about his support of a number of local influential people and armed gangs in the city of Taiz and the city of Al-Turbah, south of Taiz⁽²⁸⁾ which fought with other gangs and committed violations against civilians and contributed to the deterioration of security, especially in the city of Al-Turbah. Media outlets have talked about the man’s relationship with the UAE in order to establish influence in Taiz, and “SAM” is still looking into this matter.

Fouad Muhammad Ghaleb al-Shaddadi, a former officer in the 35th Armored Brigade and responsible for the brigade’s security points. According to information, the man had a wide influence on the command of the 35th Armored Brigade. He also worked to push the brigade into discord with the Taiz Axis, as well as participating in the fighting along with other officers in the brigade against the forces of the Taiz Axis in the Al-Hujariya areas to prevent the brigade from being handed over to its appointed commander, Abdul-Rahman Al-Shamsani. The organization obtained judicial documents calling for his appearance for investigation on allegations of his involvement in smuggling oil derivatives from Taiz to areas under the control of the Houthi group.

(26) He was appointed in March 2018

(27) He was appointed by President Hadi on November 23, 2014. He defected from the Houthis in April 2015

(28) Private sources

Abdul Karim Al-Sama'i⁽²⁹⁾, Adel Al-Asbahi⁽³⁰⁾, Dhi Yazan Muhammad Al-Amouk⁽³¹⁾, Nazih Al-Tahesh, Saddam Abdullah Ahmed Al-Dabshah, Issa Abdullah Al-Agouz, Abdul Halim Abdul Hamid Shaddad, nicknamed "Al-Kahraba'a"⁽³²⁾, and Walid Al-Raghef⁽³³⁾. Everyone led armed gangs that fought against other armed gangs, resulting in civilian casualties and contributed to the deterioration of security in the city and the southern countryside of Taiz, in addition to being active in robbery of private and public lands. "SAM" obtained judicial documents to arrest them, except for the first and second, but the security services were unable to control them. The first and second are believed to have left the city of Al-Turbah after the Taiz Axis took control of the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade.

Second Section: Accountability and Impunity

Law enforcement agencies in Taiz collapsed due to the conflict launched by the Houthi and Saleh forces on the governorate and the siege imposed on the city. This created a fertile ground for armed groups and the multiplicity of conflicts in which human rights violations were committed.

The process of rebuilding the judicial, security and military bodies in Taiz by the government authorities was not characterized by a professional nature. Therefore, many divisions emerged that were fueled by armed gangs, and the security services were unable to control them. "SAM" also obtained information that leaders in the military and security forces covered up the behavior of a number of gangs.

In addition, the weak intervention of the central government and the lack of adequate support hindered the local authorities to impose their security control. The local authorities also failed to accumulate public resources and put in place an appropriate mechanism to prevent their control; therefore, they became often subject to looting and robbery by gangs, armed entities,

(29) He worked as the director of the police of the Al-Shamaytain District before his dismissal on August 15, 2019, which he received violently. The Security Media Center of the Taiz Police described it as a rebellion against the security institutions.

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

(30) Member of the permanent committee of the General People's Congress. He was accused of receiving support from Hamoud Khaled Al-Suf

(31) Wanted by the security for his association with extremist organizations and his leadership of an armed gang

(32) The four were conscripts in the brigade of government forces in Taiz

(33) SAM obtained information that he is a member of an extremist organization. He was killed in July 2020, in mysterious circumstances, after clashes between him and the Taiz police

and civil and military leaders. According to the report of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen: “The dispute over power between the military and political elements that were only united in their fight against the Houthis, led to armed confrontations between these different groups inside the city.”⁽³⁴⁾

The infrastructure of the judiciary is still fragile and its members are subjected to systematic attacks⁽³⁵⁾, which has made its work vulnerable to the influence of powerful parties. This gave the impression that accountability for human rights violators is still far away, which tempted parties and individuals to perpetrate more human rights violations. Weak accountability and culture of impunity has contributed to the proliferation of arms groups and opened the appetite of many parties to support them.

The organization had sent letters to the former head of the Public Prosecution Office in Taiz, the director of police and the commander of the axis, requesting clarification on the cases documented in the report and the reasons that stand in the way of achieving justice for the victims, as well as the proliferation of armed gangs, but it did not receive a response from the first and second. The leadership of the Taiz Axis responded by saying: “We apologize for this description “gangs” because this means that the state does not exist and that the government forces are militias, in line with what the enemy says - according to the expression in the letter- they added, “We can say that there are individual or immediate actions outside the will of the authority that naturally occurs, but what is important is how such behavior is dealt with according to the required procedures. Also, the perpetrators should be caught and held accountable, and this is what is being done.”

(34) Page 97 of the Report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen A/ HRC/42/CRP.1 issued in September 2019. Paragraph (c) Taiz the continuing frontline. From the United Nations website (Human Rights Council)

<https://www.ohchr.org/AR/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24937&LangID=A>
 (35) SAM for Rights and Liberties. SAM Condemns Assault on Judges in Taiz Governorate. Statement. April 5, 2020. <https://bit.ly/2G0wlAd>



CHAPTER IV:

EXAMPLES OF CRIMES AND VIOLATIONS

In this chapter, the report lists examples documented by the organization of human rights violations in areas under the authority of government forces in Taiz, most notably assassinations, physical liquidation, inhumane treatment, secret graves, attacks, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, private prisons, and looting of homes and private real estate.

FIRST SECTION:

ASSASSINATIONS

The report monitored the assassination of more than (153) government recruits, civilians, activists and women. The Taiz axis told the organization: “The casualties among the recruits amounted to approximately (220) dead, and most of the assassinations took place in areas and neighborhoods that were under the control of the Abu al-Abbas groups.”

The organization noted a rise in assassinations in the years 2017, 2018. Based on the incidents documented by the report, extremist organizations were the most accused of perpetrating this crime. The organization heard testimonies confirming that leaders and members of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades were involved in committing a number of them, in addition to members of armed gangs and government soldiers. A number of incidents were recorded against unknown persons, and the evidence indicates the similarity of the means with those used by extremist organizations.

EXAMPLES

BADRIYA AQLAN, 35 YEARS OLD WOMAN AND A MOTHER OF FOUR

She was assassinated next to her house in the “Qubbet al-Ma’sour” neighborhood after sunset on Saturday, September 9, 2017, by masked gunmen in a vehicle (bus).

“SAM” reached out to her relatives who had left the city after the assassination, and Rashida (a pseudonym) said: “Badriya was near her house, when gunmen fired shots at her left side, so she fell to the ground. She was taken to Al-Thawra Hospital. Rashida accused one of her relatives named Erfan Mansour, one of the armed escorts of (Nashwan Kwati - a field commander in the Al-Kadha Front of the former Abu Al-Abbas Brigades), of carrying out the assassination. She stated that days before her assassination, that gunman entered the house and asked about her, so we denied she was there. Then he warned us that if Badriya went out alone, the end of the Eid holiday wouldn’t over until she was killed. The family didn’t take that threat seriously, but he actually carried out his threat.”

ASSASSINATION

153

victims in the areas affiliated with the Yemeni government in Taiz

106

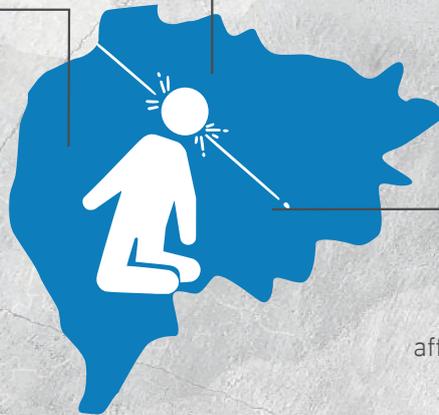
government soldiers

44

civilians, including (3) women

03

affiliated with extremist organizations



Among the total assassination victims



11

were killed by members of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades

110

victims killed by members of extremist organizations

13

victims whose assassins are unknown.

05

were killed by members of armed groups

08

by government soldiers

05

were assassinated due to past disputes, one civilian whose assassination was attributed to the former deputy governor of Taiz governorate



She added: We submitted a complaint to the Bab Musa Police Department affiliated to the Abu Abbas Brigades at the time. Its leadership responded to us that since we know our opponent, we should go after him. She stated that the victim's relatives asked the military commander, Nashwan Kwati, to bring the accused of the assassination because he was working with him, but he evaded this despite his ability to bring him, she said. She added that an al-Qaeda member and friend of the accused, Wahib al-Saher, entered the Bab Musa police station and assaulted one of her relatives and threatened the rest if they continued to pursue the case. Yet the department's administration did not take legal measures against him, but rather they released the father and brother of the suspect in the murder of the victim, who had been detained for one day."

"SAM" asked the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and the Taiz Police Department to explain what happened and the measures they had taken, but they did not respond.

OMAR ABDULLAH DUKEM AND RAFEEQ AL-AKHALI

Two civil activists, the first is described as an enlightened cleric. He worked as a preacher for the Al-Esayi mosque in the city center and often raised ideological issues that did not appeal to religious extremists.

According to testimonies heard by "SAM", the two men were assassinated near the mosque where Dukem performed the Friday sermon on March 30, 2018.

Salah (pseudonym) said: "Omar Dokum and Rafiq Al-Akhali had left the Al-Esai Mosque after Friday prayers and passed a back street to the Nima Rassam School where two masked gunmen on a motorcycle were waiting for them, and they fired five shots at them. Omar was hit in the abdomen, pelvis, and right shoulder, and Rafiq was hit by one bullet and he died. Then they were taken to Al-Rawda Hospital where Docom stayed in intensive care and died a week later."

Ayman (pseudonym) said: "I was heading to the Al-Ajimat market with my friend when we heard gunfire. We headed towards the source of the sound and found Rafiq Al-Akhali lying on the ground in a prostrate position on the wall of Rassam School. We also saw a gunshot wound to his right forearm, and we saw Omar Dokum lying on the ground behind Rafiq. We later asked who killed them, and we learned that masked gunmen shot them and fled towards Muhammad Ali Othman Street."

The organization learned that a criminal investigation team in the city moved to the crime scene, so they listened to witnesses, photographed the place and examined the two bodies in the hospital. The organization was hoping to get a response from the Taiz Police Department in regards with the investigations and the identity of those behind the assassination of the two men, but the police department refused to respond to the organization's letter.

AMAT AL-ALIM AL-ASBAHI, 40 YEARS OLD

The organization conducted an investigation after she had been murdered next to her house in the "Al-Shenini commercial" neighborhood on Sunday afternoon, December 25, 2016. It met with Khaled (pseudonym), the victim's relative, and he said: "Two people came to me and told me that Amat Al-Alim was killed. I rushed to the place and found her dead body lying on the ground and her baby Ammar Yasser crying next to her, so I took her to Al-Rawda Hospital. He added, while shrouding her, we found her phone hanging from her neck. So, I took it and looked into it and found threatening and insulting messages sent from the phone of the recruit Muhammad Abdu Saleh, brother of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades media spokesman Abdul-Rahman Abdu Saleh."

The organization learned that the victim was married to the soldier Ammar Kwati, brother of the field commander in the Abu Abbas Brigades, Nashwan Kwati. Ammar had been assassinated days before the assassination of his wife, and members of Ansar al-Sharia were accused of his assassination.

(Khaled) said: "After the killing of Ammar Kwati, I heard the head of the Judicial Committee of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, Radwan Kwati, one of Ammar's relatives, threatening to kill or poison Amat of Al-Alim because she married Ammar. The witness accused leaders of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades of assassinating Amat Al-Alim. He added that Abu al-Abbas was aware of these details and did nothing to conduct a serious investigation or to do justice to the victim's family."

"SAM" asked the command of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades to respond to the accusations against them and inquired of the Taiz police about the measures it had taken in the case but did not receive a response from both sides.

SAEED MOADH ALWAN, 26 YEARS OLD

He is a soldier in the 22nd Brigade Mika who survived an assassination attempt on Friday evening, August 11, 2017, but he sustained a permanent disability in his body and has been receiving treatment in India for four years.

“SAM” visited the victim to the hospital, met his relatives, inspected the crime scene, obtained photos of the victim after the assassination attempt, and met with a military commander, under whose command the victim used to work and collected a lot of information. As Saad was riding a motorcycle to his combat position east of Taiz, he passed by the Republican Hospital, and masked men shot him in the head, causing him to fall from his bike to the ground. A number of young men took him to Al-Rawda Hospital, where he stayed for more than a year and a half to receive treatment. The doctors decided he should travel to India, so he left for treatment, but his health condition is still deteriorating.

The organization learned that the suspect in the assassination was called Anas Adel Al-Asbahi, one of those associated with the “ISIS” organization, and he was connected to the leader in the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, Adel Al-Ezzi. “SAM” recorded that Al-Asbahi was liquidated on Wednesday, January 9, 2019 in the Al-Kadha area, where he was fighting alongside the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades after clashes between him and Adel Al-Ezzi had erupted due to disputes over the distribution of weapons.

MERCHANT RAFAA ABDO QAED AL-SHAWAFI, 30 YEARS OLD

Many parties took advantage of the insecurity and armed groups in Taiz, so they incited and financed crimes to target those whom they see as opponents and Al-Shawafi was one of their victims.

He was assassinated in front of his shop (al-Bait Al-Electrony) on Jamal Street on Thursday, August 24, 2017. “SAM” obtained judicial documents accusing Taiz Governorate Deputy Muhammad Mansour al-Shawafi, appointed during the era of former President Saleh⁽¹⁾ of inciting, tempting and financing those accused of committing the crime.

(1) He remained loyal to former President Saleh and the Houthis after the fall of the capital, Sanaa

According to the indictment issued by the Taiz Governorate Appeals Prosecution in January 2019, (6) people, including two soldiers in the Abu al-Abbas⁽²⁾ Brigades, conspired to kill the victim, Rafea al-Shawafi, after he was spotted in front of the store, and one of them fired a shot that hit the victim in the stomach. In its decision, the Public Prosecution accused “Muhammad Mansour al-Shawafi”, his son “Ali” and a person named “Muhammad Mahyoub Kabah” of inciting the direct defendants to kill Rafea, and they paid them the sum of (250,000) riyals to carry out the crime. The prosecution brought all the defendants to trial as fugitives from justice, except for the first accused, who is being held in pretrial detention. “SAM” tried to communicate with Muhammad Mansour al-Shawafi to find out his view of the accusation the prosecution had charged him with, but it was not possible to obtain a means of communicating with him.

(2) SAM keeps their names

SECOND SECTION:

ILLEGAL EXECUTIONS

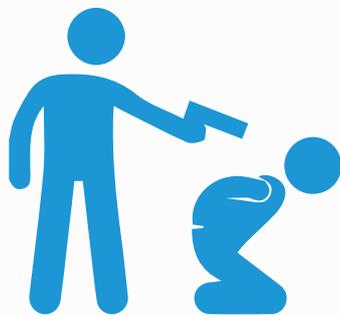
It is considered one of the most serious crimes documented by the organization. The report monitored (67) victims of this crime committed by extremist organizations, the Abu Abbas Brigades, armed gangs, government forces, and other unknown parties.

EXAMPLES

NAJEEB NAJI AL-HANASH, 42 YEARS OLD

He was liquidated after being kidnapped on Saturday, March 23, 2019 by the conscripts of the Government Security Committee while he was receiving treatment at Al-Thawra Hospital.

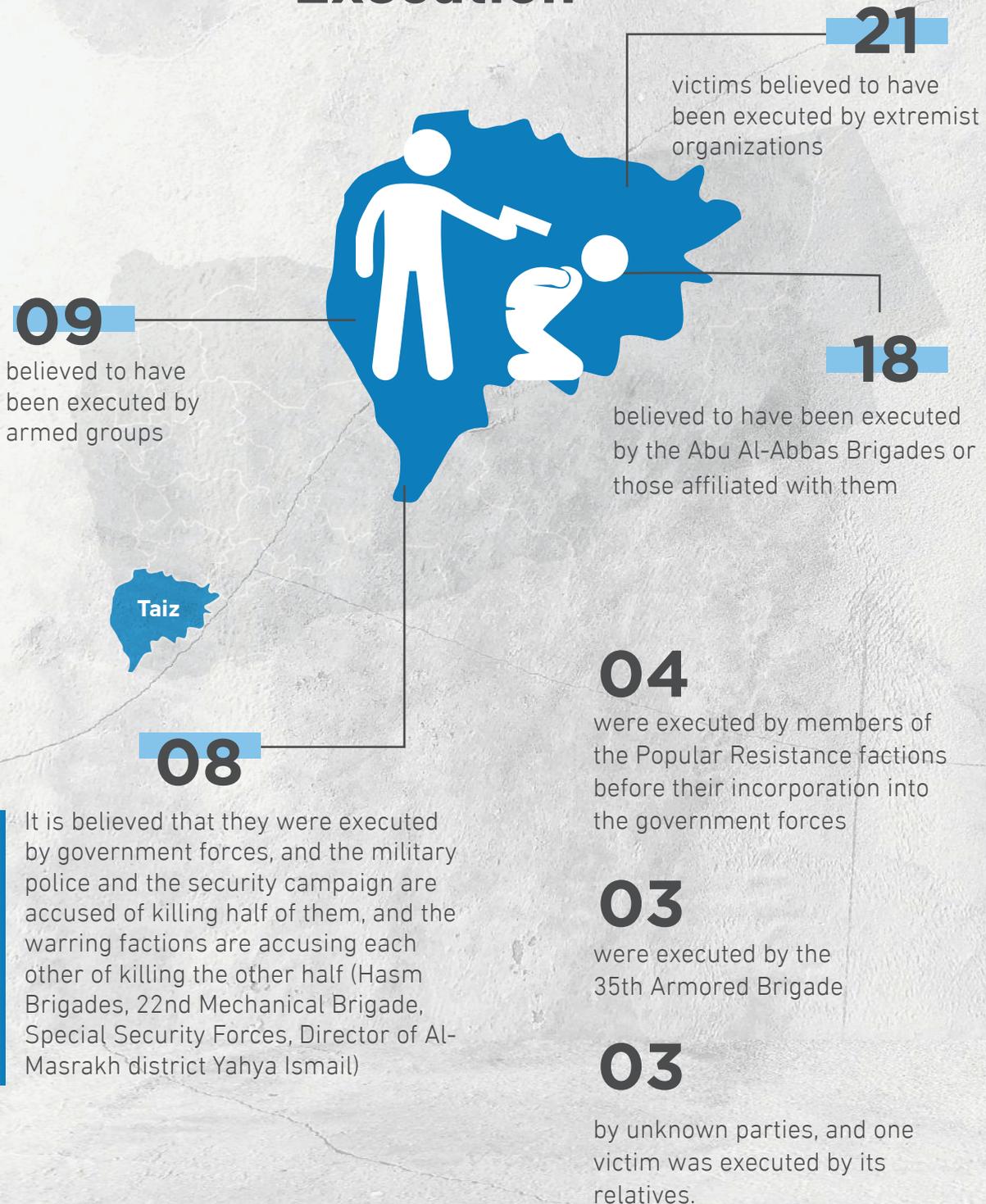
“SAM” investigated the incident and met the victim’s brother who said: “On Saturday morning, clashes broke out between the Security Committee and the Abu Abbas Brigades while Najib was inside his shop in Al-Sawani neighborhood, and he was injured in those clashes. After that, citizens took him to Al-Thawara Hospital. Then armed men affiliated with the Security Committee led by Muhammad Munir Al-Mikhlafi came and took him from the hospital to a side street next to the matter stream and started shooting him in the chest and head. Then they just left his body in the street and left. The victim’s brother added, “We filed a complaint with the police department, which investigated and collected evidence but was unable to bring the recruits who committed the crime.”



67

wrongful death crime
Among them are (5) women.

Execution



The victim's brother sums up the tragedy of his family after they failed to obtain justice: "My brother was killed whereas his killers are frolicking in the wounded city, and the officials cover up the killers and provide them with protection. My brother left behind a tired mother who does not sleep at night from crying over him. She is still waiting for him to enter the house and bring her milk. He left a widow who could hardly bear the burdens of life and raise children. He left behind children living in the false hope that their father would be discharged from the hospital and left me without support."

"SAM" obtained two documents issued by the Criminal Investigation Department in Taiz. The first indicated that the accused kidnapped the victim from the hospital despite the presence of the military police guards. The second demonstrated that the accused are in Al-Rawda neighborhood under the protection of a police officer named Abdul Aziz Bajash Al-Duais.

ABDUL BASIT AL-HAMDANI AND HIS SON SHEHAB (26,43 YEARS OLD)

He was working as a police director for Al-Misrakh district, and he was executed with his son next to his house in Najd Qaseem area on Friday, July 14, 2017.

"SAM" investigated the incident and heard from eyewitnesses, relatives of the two victims, and government officials. "SAM" also sent letters to a number of military and security authorities in Taiz and concluded that the crime was in retaliation for the killing of the director of Najd Police Department, Qasim Muhammad Al-Saba'i, and three of his escorts, which happened on the same day. It turned out that al-Hamdani and al-Saba'i were at odds over influence and financial resources in the district.

As armed men came on a military vehicle from the city of Taiz to the police station to take one of the prisoners. Al-Saba'i, the director of the department, prevented them, but they took the prisoner by force, so Al-Saba'i went with them in his car to deliver the prisoner to Sheikh Aref Jamel, the deputy governor of Taiz. Then they passed through the Aqabat Najd Qaseem market where they were shot at, and Al-Saba'i and three of his escorts were killed. It later became clear that those who killed them were gunmen affiliated with the Police Director of Al-Misrakh District, Abdul Basit Al-Hamdani, who were following Al-Saba'i and the gunmen that took the prisoner from the police station.

About an hour after the killing of al-Saba'i, dozens of armed men from his relatives and recruits gathered on vehicles and military pickups belonging to the 35th Armored Brigade next to al-Hamdani's house in Najd Qaseem. They surrounded the house, arrested al-Hamdani and his son, and brutally executed them.

Witness Nouredine (pseudonym) said: "Regarding the killing of Al-Saba'i and three of his escorts, I heard heavy gunfire during Friday prayers. After it stopped, I went to see what happened and saw four dead people lying on the ground. He added, an hour after their killing, I saw conscripts and the officer "Muhammad Shamsan Al-Jaradi," on two vehicles of the 35th Armored Brigade shooting at the house of Abdul-Basit Al-Hamdani. Then I heard about the killing of Al-Hamdani and his son Shehab, so I went to the place where they were killed and saw the body of Abdul Baset Al-Hamdani and the body of his son Shehab, both lying next to the asphalt line."

Witness Muhammad (pseudonym) said: "After the killing of al-Saba'i and his escorts, I saw military vehicles belonging to the 35th Armored Brigade carrying soldiers and officers, including officer Nadhem al-Aqlani. After they reached the house of Abdul Basit Al-Hamdani, they shot the house, and Al-Hamdani and his escorts responded by shooting back. I also saw dozens of armed supporters of Muhammad al-Saba'i surrounding al-Hamdani's house. The witness adds that the leaders of the military campaign were able to enter the house of Al-Hamdani and persuaded him to surrender, and they took him and his son Shihab to the asphalt line. So, gunmen executed them in the middle of the line, and I witnessed heavy shooting from the supporters of Saba'i and the recruits on top of the military vehicles, rejoicing at the liquidation of Al-Hamdani and his son."

A local government official⁽³⁾ told the organization: "The military vehicle that left the city of Taiz to the area police station to take the prisoner belongs to Ansar al-Sharia, and the military campaign that came out of the 35th Armored Brigade and attacked the house of al-Hamdani was led by the security officer of the brigade Muhammad Shamsan al-Jaradi. He added that Al-Hamdani surrendered to leadership of the military campaign after pledging not to harm him. After surrendering, he was liquidated along with his son Shihab."

"SAM" asked the command of the 35th Armored Brigade for an explanation of the killing of Al-Hamdani and his son while they were protecting the military campaign, and the measures taken to hold the perpetrators accountable, but it did not receive a response from the brigade.

(3) SAM keeps his name

YASMIN RAJEH (PSEUDONYM), 27 YEARS OLD

One of (5) women who were liquidated during the reporting period. “SAM” documented the liquidation incident from various sources and inquired about what happened to her. Fatima (pseudonym), the victim’s relative, said: “Ali Al-Sharabi, Yasmine’s husband, who was a soldier in the Abu al-Abbas Brigades was killed by two bombs thrown by unknown persons to the yard of his house on the morning of Tuesday, January 9, 2018 while Yasmin was in the hospital, receiving medical treatment. She added that after the murder of her husband, Yasmin was threatened by his relatives, accusing her of helping to kill him, and when the threats against her increased, we went to complain to “Abu al-Abbas”, but he refused to meet us. 19 days after her husband’s murder, the director of the Al-Bab Al-Kabeer Police Department, Muhammad Kandash⁽⁴⁾, came with armed men to the house of Yasmin’s father in the Wadi Al-Madam neighborhood, and they took her and her sister Rahaf to the police station where they were held throughout the day. Then they subjected her to house arrest, so the investigator from the police station would come to interrogate her to the house.”

Rahaf (pseudonym), the victim’s sister, said: “At 10:00 pm, Tuesday, July 24, 2018, (6) armed men from the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades⁽⁵⁾ raided the house, and (3) of them entered and shot Yasmin while she was in the hall of the house with her family members. She added that she watched her running away to her room, so the gunmen followed her and fired all the bullets of their rifles on her body one by one. Because of the abundance of bullets, her body was torn and her blood was flying on the walls of the room. She added, the gunmen then went out and shot in the air for joy, saying, “Today our brother is a groom.”

The witness described the ugliness of what happened by saying: “One of my sisters was shocked by what she witnessed, and her brother Muhammad had epilepsy from the brutality he witnessed during the execution of the crime.”

The organization reached out to the former head of Taiz Public Prosecution and the police chief to inquire about the measures taken regarding the liquidation of the victim. It also inquired of the commander of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades about the accusation against his brigades of liquidating Yasmin, but it did not receive a response from those parties.

(4) He was then under the influence of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades

(5) SAM keeps their names

DIRECTOR OF HODH AL-ASHRAF POLICE DEPARTMENT, IYAD MUHAMMAD AL-SAGHIR, 32 YEARS OLD

He was kidnapped on Wednesday, August 9, 2017, and his body was found buried in the yard of an abandoned house east of the city. “SAM” investigated the incident and found out that the perpetrators of the crime were members of the extremist organization “ISIS”.

Al-Saghir worked as director of the Hodh Al-Ashraf Police Department, near Souk Al-Samil neighborhood, where the extremist organizations were stationed. He was carrying out his duties in pursuit of the thieves of the copper wire of the electricity and telephone network. He tracked some of the owners of the workshops that buy this loot, and because what he is doing has upset the extremist elements who carry out these actions, he has been kidnapped and liquidated at the hands of these elements.

“SAM” met Ammar (pseudonym), one of Al-Saghir’s relatives, four months after the crime. He said: “Because of what Al-Saghir had done in persecuting the owners of the workshops that were buying the looted copper cables, he was threatened by the armed men who were looting those cables. On Wednesday, armed men led by a person named “Mohamed Al-Jazzar”⁽⁶⁾ came to the house of the director of the department in Hodh Al-Ashraf neighborhood and took him by force. Two days later, we found his body buried, covered with a blanket, and pelted with stones in the yard of an abandoned house in the neighborhood, so we pulled it out and transferred it to the morgue of Al-Rawda Hospital. He added that “Hareth Al-Ezzi” intervened and he investigated the case. We learned from him that al-Saghir was liquidated by gunmen led by Hisham al-Raymi⁽⁷⁾. The victim’s relative stated that they did not file an official complaint because they were afraid of the extremist organizations present in the Souk al-Samil neighborhood before they were later expelled by government forces.”

ABDUL RAHMAN OSIORAN, 23 YEARS OLD

“SAM” documented the incident of his execution in a square opposite the headquarters of the Abu Abbas Brigades after his arrest from his home in the afternoon of Friday, May 6, 2016. “SAM” met with a number of witnesses and obtained a video documenting the moment of the execution.

Munther (pseudonym) said: “Dozens of armed men on military vehicles of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades surrounded the house of Abdul-Rahman’s father in the Ishaq neighborhood to arrest him on charges of killing Waseem al-Absi,

(6) SAM learned that he is an ISIS member

(7) He is affiliated with ISIS in Taiz, and is believed to have been killed later

a recruit in the Brigades. The gunmen burned two cars in the yard of the house, so Hareth Al-Ezzi, a member of Ansar Al-Sharia, arrived to mediate between the brigades and Abdul Rahman's family in order to surrender, but his family refused to hand him over. The witness added after that, Sheikh Abu al-Abbas, the commander of the brigades, arrived and committed to the family that he would interrogate Abdul-Rahman and return him to the house. Abdul-Rahman was reassured by the Sheikh's words and turned himself in. Abu al-Abbas carried him on his own armored vehicle and transported him to the brigades' headquarters."

Munther continues: "After taking him to the brigades' headquarters, they asked him to bring the accused of killing Waseem al-Absi, and he promised them to search for him until the evening. Abu al-Abbas ordered his deputy, Adel al-Ezzi, to kill Abdul-Rahman in case he did not bring the accused of killing Waseem al-Absi. Then he drove his armored car away. After about half an hour, Adel Al-Ezzi tied up Abdul-Rahman's hands and put him inside a bus with darkened windows, and an armored military vehicle followed him. Abdul-Rahman tried to escape from them, but the gunmen shot him in the body."

In the video obtained by the organization, Abdul-Rahman appeared while he was handcuffed and he was shot in the head and body until parts of his head were scattered. It is noted that there were dozens of armed men at the crime scene, some of whom participated in shooting the victim. "SAM" asked the commander of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades about the information it had obtained, and inquired of the police department about the measures it had taken for accountability, but it did not receive a response from those parties.

ASEEL ABDUL HAKIM AL-JABZI, 25 YEARS OLD

"SAM" investigated the assassination of Aseel al-Jabzi in the village of "Al-Har" Jabzia, and the killing of Mahfouz al-Saadi. It also listened to relatives of the victims and sheikhs in the Al-Ma'afar district, south of Taiz, which coincided with the fighting between the Taiz Axis forces and dissident officers in the 35th Armored Brigade.

Abdul Qader (pseudonym) said: "After altercations between gunmen loyal to the forces of the Taiz Axis on the one hand, and members of the family of the officer in the 35th Armored Brigade, Abdul Hakim al-Jabzi⁽⁸⁾, al-Jabzi arrived at the brigade's headquarters, accompanied by gunmen, and set up a checkpoint inside the village next to the checkpoint set up by gunmen loyal to the Taiz Axis. He added, there was an altercation between the personnel of

(8) One of the defected officers in the 35th Armored Brigade and fought against the forces of the Taiz axis

the two points, which developed into shooting between the two groups, and Mahfouz Al-Saadi was killed.

Abdul Qader added: “Abdul Hakim Al-Jabzi fled the village with a group of armed men on foot, while two gunmen of his escorts, two of his brothers and his son Aseel remained in his house, in addition to his family. So, the family of the murdered Mahfouz surrounded the house of al-Jabzi with the intention of arresting the killers.”

Sheikh Abdul Wali (pseudonym), one of the local mediators in the case, said: “After al-Jabzi left his home, he mobilized his colleagues in the brigade, and a military campaign consisting of (8) pickups and one military armored vehicle led by Raed al-Hajj, Taha Aoun and Fouad al-Shaddadi, officers in the 35th brigade went out and arrived at the “Al-Dabba” area, which is located between the village of Al-Hajarin and Al-Har. So, a number of sheikhs and I in the area went to the leaders of the military campaign to mediate between them and the gunmen who were surrounding al-Jabzi’s house. The leaders of the campaign gave us a deadline until five in the afternoon to lift the siege on al-Jabzi’s house, or they would storm the village to lift the siege on the house.”

The sheik added: “I asked the leadership of the campaign to negotiate with the family of the murdered Mahfoudh, so I contacted his uncle, Abdul Raqeb Ali Saif, Ahmed Zangala, and the officer Abdul Salam Al-Olayani⁽⁹⁾, as they represented this party. I asked Abdul Raqeb to lift the siege on al-Jabzi’s house, and he accepted on the condition that the young men accused of killing Mahfoudh, who were holed up inside the house, be handed over to the military police in Taiz. However, the leadership of the military campaign refused this and demanded that the besieged and besieging youth be handed over to the Al-Nashma Security Department or to the 35th Armored Brigade. In the evening, when we did not reach an agreement as mediators with the two parties, I asked the campaign leadership to leave the place so that they could continue their mediation efforts. The armored vehicles of the military campaign opened fire on the gunmen loyal to the Mahfoudh’s family stationed in Jabal al-Rahish, and the campaign threatened to storm the village, but it left after half an hour from that place. The leaders of the campaign also threatened to upload the coordinates of the homes of the family and the supporters of the murdered Mahfouz, and I left for my home.”

The witness said: “On the second day, I went to negotiate with the family of the murdered Mahfoudh, and I contacted al-Khawlani, the commander of the

(9) An officer in the government forces in Marib

military police in Taiz, who happened to arrive at Al-Nashma with a military campaign that followed the Taiz Axis. I asked him to send military pickups to take the trapped youth, but he apologized because the 35th Brigade recruits were stationed at the Sanna point between Al-Nashma and the village we are in. Al-Khwilani suggested handing over the trapped youths in al-Jabzi's house to the director of the Misrakh District, Yahya Ismail, but I apologized because there were no forces with me that could protect me and the trapped youths in case I took them."

The witness continued: "In the evening, I received calls from Mahfoudh's family informing me that the gunmen in al-Jabzi's house had escaped and were arrested in the valley. He said that the gunmen from Mahfoudh's family stormed the house and took his son Aseel while Mahfoudh's family denied that Aseel had been arrested or that he was with them. I remained in contact with the two parties, and each party was giving me information that contradicted the information of the other party regarding Aseel, and at about 1:00 am we heard heavy gunfire. In the morning, we learned that Aseel had been killed, and I went to the village and saw Aseel's body, and I asked Abdul Raqeeb Saif, Mahfoudh's uncle why he killed Aseel, but he denied it.

The witness added: "An employee from the criminal investigation came to inspect the body, and I saw Aseel's hands tied with a piece of cloth, and I saw one of his fingers cut off. I also saw his neck tied with a second piece of cloth which indicates that Aseel had been dragged while alive. I also noticed a trace of a bullet in his jaw, a trace of a bullet in his head, and a trace of nearly eight bullets in his back and thigh, so we covered the body with a blanket and transported it to the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade and then Khalifa Hospital. As for the rest of the escorts who were in al-Jabzi's house, Abdul Raqeeb Saif transferred them to the military police headquarters in Taiz, and the security campaign managed, two days later, to arrest Ahmed Zangala and put him in the central prison."

THIRD SECTION: TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

“SAM” investigated cases of torture and it turned out that it was practiced systematically despite the limited statistics collected by the organization for the victims of this type of incident, and the victims did not receive justice.

SAM documented the death of (15) victims, including two children and a woman

15

02

The death of (2) in a prison belonging to the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades

06

death of (6) detainees in prisons affiliated with the government forces

Taiz

02

death of (2) detainees in prisons belonging to extremist organizations

03

detainees in the custody of the police in Jabal Habbashi District and the Adhabab Police

01

detainee died in a prison belonging to the 35th Armored Brigade, and one woman died under torture at the hands of one of her relatives.



EXAMPLES

CITIZEN ABU BAKR MANSOUR AL-BARAKANI, 35 YEARS OLD

The Jabal Habashi Police detained him because of a criminal case between him and one of his relatives. On the night of Sunday, September 18, 2016, he was tortured by Police Director Tawfiq Al-Waqar and other recruits, and he died in prison.

“SAM” listened to witnesses and obtained documents, information and photos of the victim. Ibrahim (pseudonym) said: “Tawfiq Al-Waqar and other recruits entered the victim’s detention room at midnight on Sunday to interrogate him about the killing of his wife, for whom he had filed a complaint. During his interrogation, Al-Waqar and his soldiers used a thick stick to hit him on his stomach, back and parts of his body, and kicked him with their feet until he died. I saw the marks of the beatings on his body after his death. He added that the command of the Taiz Axis intervened to reconcile and persuaded the victim’s family to accept the blood money, but they did not punish the perpetrators, and the accused, Tawfiq Al-Waqar, was not removed from his position.”

In its letter, “SAM” asked the Taiz Police Command and the Taiz Axis, whether punitive action was taken against the district’s police director and the other defendants. The command of the Taiz Axis responded that the organization should inquire of the Jabal Habashi Police Department about this incident. The organization learned that a decision was issued by the Taiz Police Department to remove Tawfiq Al-Waqar from his position in August 2020, but he refused to implement it, so the police used force to remove him. Then an exchange of fire took place between them and Al-Waqar and his gunmen, and the Taiz Police Department was able to replace him with another officer.

THE CHILD, MISHAAL MAHMOUD SALEM, 17 YEARS OLD

One of those who were subjected to inhuman treatment in the prison of the 35th Armored Brigade after being detained by military personnel in the brigade’s intelligence and died because of it. He is from the marginalized group or those known as black-skinned people.

“SAM” investigated the crime and listened to a number of testimonies. It concluded that conscripts led by Abdul-Jabbar Tarish arrived at the victim’s hometown, Ard Barman Adeem, on the night of Tuesday, June 12, 2018, and arrested (Mishaal) and two others. Some of their relatives went to inform the police of the nearby city of Al-Turbah, and one of the officers promised them to search for them. The officer then learned that (Mishaal) was being

held at the headquarters of the 35th Armored Brigade in the Al-Ain area. On the second day, Abdul-Jabbar Tarish and other gunmen returned Mishaal to the village. Signs of torture and severe exhaustion were seen on him. So, Tarish asked Mishaal's mother for a sum of 200,000 riyals in exchange for the release of her son, and the mother paid the sum. However, the kidnappers took other sums of money from his family. One of the recruits on behalf of the brigade's intelligence issued a receipt for part of the amount, and they delayed his release. Then the family received his dead body.

Salah (pseudonym) said: "Mishaal was transferred from his detention center in 35th Brigade to a building in Dhuhban area, and his family knew about this. His wife moved to visit him, and she was allowed to do so. She saw signs of torture, and she saw armed men assaulting her husband in her presence."

Murad (pseudonym) adds: "We learned that Mishaal's body was in the morgue of Khalifa Hospital in Al-Turbah City, so we moved to see it. One of the workers confirmed that armed men on the 35th Armored Brigade vehicle were the ones who brought the body. He added, "We saw the corpse with signs of beating on the head, "burns marks" in the back, cracks and swelling in his hands and feet, and a facial deformity. We submitted a complaint to the Public Prosecution, so it proceeded with its procedures and requested the rest of Mishaal's colleagues who are detained in the 35th Armored Brigade, and they were brought. Marks of torture were noticed on their bodies, and they looked exhausted, tired and scared. The Public Prosecution also received two accused of torturing Mishaal and his two companions while it was unable to bring the main accused, Abdul-Jabbar Tarish and other defendants."

The 35th Armored Brigade published a statement on its Facebook page in which it said: "On June 16, 2018, four people, including two members of the brigade, arrived at the temporary headquarters of the brigade (Al Ain camp), and they were accompanied by three people accused of theft in order to place them in custody. In the investigation, it was noted that the defendants had been subjected to severe assault and beatings, and they were taken to the hospital for treatment. From there they were transferred to the camp for the purpose of placing them in detention... During the investigation, it was noted that the third defendant (the victim) suffers from complications of torture, which he was subjected to before being transferred to the brigade headquarters. Also, he was released from the hospital before completing the necessary treatment, and then transferred to the Al-Ain camp detention."⁽¹⁰⁾

(10) Facebook page of 35th Armored Brigade Legitimacy. Statement. July 5, 2018
<https://www.facebook.com/35m.taiz/>

THE CHILD, RAMI ALI AL-ZUBAIDI, 17 YEARS OLD

Nine days after he was kidnapped by gunmen affiliated with what is known as ISIS, his family received his body bearing signs of torture.

“SAM” investigated the incident as part of the incidents of torture practiced by the extremist organizations that controlled the neighborhoods east of the city of Taiz before they were expelled from the government forces and listened to multiple testimonies. Bandar (a pseudonym) said: “On the morning of Sunday, June 10, 2018, gunmen came to the victim’s house in the city center and arrested him. We were receiving news that he was being held in a prison in the Souk Al Samil neighborhood. Nine days later, someone called “Abu Musab” and asked me to come to the Suq Al-Samil mosque. I went to him and saw Rami’s corpse with scars and broken hands. The witness added, the imam of the mosque told me that gunmen known to him brought Rami while he was shrouded and asked him to pray for him as he was killed in a battle. He became suspicious of them and hence opened the shroud and saw Rami with signs of torture on his body. He was able to arrest a number of the gunmen who brought the body and handed them over to “Abu al-Bara”, the judge of Ansar al-Sharia.”

The witness added: “We took the body to the mortuary in Al-Rawda Hospital, and armed men followed me and asked us to bury the body fast before being forensically examined. They attacked a monitor working for an organization who was photographing the corpse. We buried it without knowing the fate of the defendants, who were handed over to the Ansar al-Sharia judge.”

THE SOLDIER AMMAR NAJI AL-ARASHANI, 27 YEARS OLD

One of the victims of torture in the prisons of the Abu Abbas Brigades the organization investigated. He was kidnapped on Saturday, January 19, 2019, and six days later, his body was transferred by gunmen in the brigades to the mortuary of Al-Rawda Hospital.

Yaqoub (pseudonym), a relative of the victim, said: “On Saturday afternoon, Ammar took his car from his hometown in Al-Sharja, Jabal Habashi, to the Al-Baireen market between the cities of Taiz and Al-Turbah. When he arrived, armed men in a military pickup led by Adel Al-Ezzi, the deputy commander of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades, and his brother Alaa Al-Ezzi gathered round him. They beat Ammar and took him by force and transferred him to the prison of the brigades in al-Shaab School near the Al-Kadha area.”

The witness continued saying: “On the second day, the brigades transferred Ammar to their headquarters in the Hail Complex School. I went to meet Abu al-Abbas, but I was not able. However, one of the residents told me that he

was able to visit Ammar in the prison and saw him in a bad condition. He added that the matter worried me, so I went again to meet Abu Al-Abbas in his house, but I was prevented from entering. I conveyed a message to him through his escort that Ammar's health had deteriorated, and Abu al-Abbas replied that if Ammar died, he would bear his responsibility. The witness adds that after six days, members of the brigades transferred Ammar's body to the mortuary of Al-Rawda Hospital, and a source in the hospital informed me. I went to the hospital and saw the corpse bearing signs of torture. I submitted a request to the Public Prosecution to assign a forensic doctor to perform an autopsy, but the doctor apologized and was satisfied with the apparent examination."

"SAM" got a coroner's report that said: through the physical examination, we did not find any signs of external violence. A widespread rash was found on the body, which is one of the usual signs to be seen in some cases of fevers resulting from acute viral or bacterial infections. It is not possible to deny or prove the existence of any traces of internal injury or signs of internal violence except through autopsy."

The organization was keen to know the viewpoint of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades in the accusations leveled against them, but it did not receive a response until writing the report.

THE SOLDIER, AYMAN MUHAMMAD AL-WAHBANI, 22 YEARS OLD

Armed men from the Taiz Axis forces kidnapped him for unknown reasons and took him into custody where he died.

"SAM" conducted an investigation into the incident, listened to testimonies, obtained medical and technical reports, and a case report issued by the Taiz axis forces.

Abdul Majed (pseudonym) said: "The gunmen kidnapped Ayman on Wednesday, November 27, 2019, and we learned three days later that he was being held in the Taiz Axis Command Prison. We went several times to check, but the prison officials denied his existence. On one of the visits, we sat with (Abdul-Fattah Ismail), one of the prison officials, and he acknowledged that Ayman was there and promised to release him, but he did not. We brought military figures to intercede with the command of Taiz Axis, but they did not reach a conclusion. The witness added, on December 24, 2019, we received a phone call from a prison official requesting our presence to help Ayman, as he was suffering from a health problem, according to his claim. Ayman's father came and was asked to pledge to take his son to hospital and bring him back, so he did what he was asked to do. When he entered the

detention room, he found Ayman dead.” Abdul Majed continues: “The victim’s family demanded the command of the Taiz Axis to perform an autopsy and determine the cause of death, but they refused under the pretext of the lack of means. The forensic doctor was summoned and ostensibly examined the body. As for those responsible for Ayman’s death, the witness stated that the leadership of the Taiz Axis did not bring them to the investigation conducted by the Military Prosecution.”

The photographed forensic report stated that the cause of Ayman’s death was the consumption of a toxic substance, and the forensic doctor’s report stated that he died of hemorrhagic disease (hemorrhagic fever) such as dengue fever.

The organization asked the officials in the Taiz Axis about the incident, and they replied that Ayman had a fever in prison and had died naturally. They stated that the responsibility was tortuous, and the prosecution had the right to take what it deemed appropriate for those whose negligence was proven. The Taiz Axis also mentioned in its response that an autopsy outside the country was out of the question, as the body was examined twice by the forensic doctor.

The organization obtained a memorandum issued by the Fourth Military District Prosecution stating that it had investigated the case and sent its file to the Fourth Military District Appeal Prosecution to refer it to the court. However, what was stated in it contradicts what witnesses said that the officials had not been brought before the Public Prosecution Office for investigation at the time of writing this report.

FOURTH SECTION:

THE ATTACKS

The combatants in Taiz used medium and light weapons to launch attacks against each other and against civilians. Local media reported that government forces and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades used indiscriminate shells, but “SAM” did not obtain physical evidence to confirm these allegations.

EXAMPLES

The killing of Sadiq Al-Mughales and Abdul Fattah Al-Athwari in the fighting of factions and armed gangs

The fighting between the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and the Ghazwan al-Mikhlafi gang was renewed from time to time during the years 2018, 2017, 2016 to control the revenues of the city’s markets. “SAM” has documented a number of attacks against civilians due to this fighting.

(5) civilians were killed and (8) others were injured on Thursday and Friday, corresponding to 14 and 13 July 2017, as a result of the fighting between the two sides in downtown neighborhoods. The organization obtained the data of the civilian deaths. The victims are Fahd Ali Hassan, Mujahid Saeed Ahmed, Abu Bakr Saif Saeed, Sadiq Amin Al-Mughales, and Abdul Fattah Abdullah Al-Athwari.

The father of the killed Sadiq Al-Mughals, said: Sadiq was in his room getting ready for Friday prayer when we heard a gunshot that entered through the window and hit him in the left thigh which caused him severe bleeding. He added, “We were not able to take him to hospital because there were armed men stationed in one of the buildings next to the house, and they fired indiscriminately. When the shooting calmed down, we tried to take him to hospital but he was already dead.”

The organization’s team inspected the location of the incident and listened to witnesses who confirmed that the building from which the bullets were fired used by gunmen affiliated with Ghazwan Al-Mikhlafi.

Hafedh (pseudonym), a relative of the victim, Abdul Fattah al-Athwari, said: “Abdul-Fattah was riding his motorcycle in the lower Tahrir Street on Friday morning when clashes erupted between gunmen affiliated with Ghazwan al-Mikhlafi and others affiliated with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades. Abdul-Fattah was hit by a bullet that penetrated the front of his head and exited from the back of the head, causing him to fall off his bike. He continued to bleed to death. Passers-by could not save him because of the clashes, and when the shooting calmed down, residents pulled the body and placed it in the morgue of Al-Rawda Hospital.”

THE KILLING OF THE LITTLE GIRL, NOURAN MUJIB, BY THE WEAPONS OF UNCONTROLLED GANGS

“SAM” documented civilian casualties in armed attacks due to the security chaos and the spread of armed groups in the city of Taiz. One of these victims was the 7-year-old girl, Nouran Mujib Qassem, who was shot dead by an armed group near her house on Thursday afternoon, January 24, 2019.

Officer Mujib, the father of the little girl, Nouran, said: “My daughter went out to buy sweets from the grocery store when a group of (5) armed men attacked the owner of the Al-Safa water desalination plant near the house and shot him. My daughter was hit by a bullet that penetrated her back and exited her chest. So, I took her to the al-Buraihi Hospital but she was already dead. The father of the girl added, I filed a complaint with the police, and during investigations, it became clear that the gunmen were soldiers in the government’s 17th Infantry Brigade⁽¹¹⁾. We asked to bring them to justice, so the general turned over three of them, and the police were unable to bring two more.”

Mujib added that influential figures led efforts for reconciliation and pressured him to agree, waive, and receive blood money instead of a judicial claim, and he succumbed to these pressures. The organization obtained a copy of the reconciliation document led by Abdo Farhan Salem, advisor to the Taiz Axis. The organization learned that the girl’s father had died due to health complications he had suffered after his daughter’s death.

(11) SAM keeps their names

THE KILLING OF THE CHILD DUA'A AL-HAMIDI AND MRS. NAJAT AL-JOUFI

During the fighting that erupted between the forces of the Taiz Axis on the one hand, and the Abu Abbas Brigades on the other hand in March and April 2019, SAM monitored the killing of (12) civilians and the wounding of (29) others, including two who were subjected to a field execution, one of whom was executed by individuals belonging to the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, and the second by individuals affiliated with the government forces.

Saleh, the father of the child, Dua'a Al-Hamdi, who was killed on Friday, April 26, 2019 said: "My house in the Nasiriyah neighborhood was close to the fighting between the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and the government security committee. Therefore, the armed men from the Abu al-Abbas Brigades were stationed in buildings opposite the house whereas the gunmen of the Security Committee were stationed next to the neighborhood mosque near the house. As a result, Dua'a was shot by a sniper while she was playing with her brother in the yard. The entrance to the shot was from the direction in which the Abu Abbas Brigades were stationed. I took her to the Burihi Hospital, but when I arrived, she was already dead."

The husband of Mrs. Najat Al-Joufi, who was killed by a bullet that penetrated her body while she was sleeping in her home in Sina neighborhood on Thursday, March 21, 2019 said: "Najat was sleeping in her room during the fighting between the soldiers of the Security Committee and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades militants when a bullet penetrated the window of the house and landed in her back. I rushed to save her and I took her to the al-Buraihi Hospital, but she died."

FIFTH SECTION:

THE CLANDESTINE GRAVES

The police in the city of Taiz found (16) bodies in four mass graves. The identities of (5) were identified as government soldiers. The first grave, inside which (5) bodies were found, is in the Intelligence neighborhood in Al-Jumhuri District and was discovered on Monday, May 22, 2018. The second one was the yard of the houses next to the fire department in the Al-Ordhi area, where (3) bodies were found on December 18, 2018. The third one was in the yard of a house in Souk Al-Samil neighborhood, where (6) bodies were discovered on December 19, 2018. The fourth was also in a yard of a house located in Souk Al-Samil neighborhood, and two bodies were found on 20 December 2018.

“SAM” investigated the circumstances of finding the grave in the Intelligence neighborhood, and the organization is still working to reach the full truth about the other graves. It turned out that the neighborhoods in which the graves were found were under the control of extremist organizations and the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, east of the city.

MODELS

AL-MUKHABARAT NEIGHBORHOOD GRAVE, IN WHICH FIVE BODIES WERE FOUND

“SAM” was keen to communicate with various parties. It listened to eyewitnesses, victims’ families, police officers, members of the exhumation committee set up by the local authority, and government officials, inquired about the Public Prosecution, and obtained documents and photos of the bodies. The grave was found after the fighting that erupted between government forces and extremist organizations in late April 2018.

According to witnesses⁽¹²⁾ heard by “SAM”, four recruits in the 22nd Brigade Mika whose names are Muhammad Saif Sarhan, Abu Bakr Saif al-Razeqi, Najm al-Din Hazza al-Tuwaiji, and Abdullah Hazza al-Twaiji went to visit their relative in the city center on Friday, May 18, 2018, but gunmen intercepted them next to the Nasser School, which is close to the headquarters of the Abu Abbas Brigades, and kidnapped them to an unknown location.

(12) Confidential sources

Four days after their abduction, one of the residents found traces of blood and a strange hole, which later turned out to be a grave for government recruits in the 22nd Brigade Mika. A fifth body was also found near them. They were recovered from the Al-Jumhuri police soldiers and taken to the Wadi Al-Madam cemetery.

Mrs. Rahma (pseudonym), an eyewitness, said: “One of the shepherds entered to graze his flock in the backyard of Al-Aqsa School, which is attached to the intelligence building. He saw traces of blood and a basement that had been filled with dirt. So, he went to inform the leader of neighborhood and the police department. Then a team from the police department came and dug up the basement and found a body. They dug near it and found four bodies.”

The organization obtained a security report issued by the Al-Jumhuri Police Department in which it stated: “After a report by citizens about the presence of fetid odors in the schoolyard, the department members moved and searched the place and found four decomposed bodies.

The department informed the Director of Criminal Investigation in Taiz, who ordered them to bury the bodies, as hospitals would not receive them in that condition, so the policemen buried them. On the second day, the report added, the department was informed that there was another decomposed body buried in the yard of the intelligence building, so they informed the Director of Criminal Investigation and also ordered them to bury it. The report stated that not everyone responded to the police in the incident, and the police department does not have the capabilities to complete the procedures and keep the bodies.”

The victim’s brother, Muhammad Saif Sarhan, said: “My brother and his three colleagues were kidnapped by gunmen affiliated with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades. We sent mediators and followed up on the leadership of the brigades, but they denied their presence. He added, after finding their bodies, I recognized my brother’s body through the nail of the big toe of his right foot, which was cut in half and the clothes he was wearing on the day of his kidnapping. He said that his brother’s colleagues had been identified by their relatives except for a fifth unidentified body, and they were all buried weeks after they were found.”

Medical reports and photographed forensic evidence obtained by the organization confirmed that the five victims were shot dead before burial.

The news of the discovery of a graveyard received wide interaction in the media platforms, so Dr. Amin Mahmoud, the former governor of Taiz, commissioned a committee to investigate the case. The committee went to the Wadi al-Madam cemetery and retrieved the bodies and transferred them to the morgue of the al-Rawda hospital.

“SAM” asked for an explanation from Amin Mahmoud, the former governor of Taiz, about the accusations against the Abu Abbas Brigades and the circumstances of what happened and he said: “All these are lies and fabrications by Salem and his colleagues at the headquarters - he means the Islah Party in Taiz - He added, the bodies of the dead in Taiz were being thrown in al-Sailah and in the streets. When we directed the security department to move quickly and investigate, they did not move a finger.”

“SAM” asked the former Chief Public Prosecutor in Taiz and the Taiz Police Director for an explanation of the measures taken by these parties. It asked them whether the accused were arrested as part of the accountability and justice investigation regarding the four graves, and whether the identities of the unknown bodies were identified, but they did not respond to the organization’s letter.

SIXTH SECTION:

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

“SAM” investigated the incidents of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance practiced by all parties in Taiz and monitored the detention of (269) victims during the reporting period, including (109) in prisons belonging to the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades and (78) in prisons belonging to the government forces, in addition to detaining (47) in the prisons of the 35th Armored Brigade and (35) in prisons of extremist organizations, while the detention of (22) was recorded by unknown parties.

“SAM” has monitored (32) forcibly disappeared, and government forces are accused of being responsible for the disappearance of (19) of them. The extremist organizations are accused of disappearing (7). The Abu Al-Abbas Brigades are accused of (3) cases of enforced disappearance. There are (3) other disappeared persons. The Special Forces are accused of being responsible for the disappearance of one of them, and the director of the cultural office is accused of disappearing another one whereas the third one was hidden by an unknown party.

EXAMPLES OF ARBITRARY DETENTION

SUFIAN AHMED TAHA AND ABDULJABAR AL-MUNAIFI

They were arrested on the evening of Tuesday, April 24, 2018, from inside the Al-Khairat Mosque in the Al-Jumhuri neighborhood. They were subjected to inhuman treatment and were released by local mediation.

“SAM” investigated the incident. Sufian, who served as president of the Association of the Blind in Taiz, said: “My colleague and I were preparing for prayer in the mosque when armed men led by Ahmed Al-Surra⁽¹³⁾ interrupted us. They took us, blindfolded us, and transferred us on a military pickup to a house in Al-Mujalia neighborhood. They put me in one room and Abdul-Jabbar in another room. They hit me in the face and head. He added, “meanwhile, I heard shooting in the room where Abdul-Jabbar was being held. Then the gunmen told me we will kill you like your friend, and I got so scared. After about an hour, they transferred us on a pickup and threatened to kill us and throw our bodies to al-Sailah, but they took us to the headquarters of the Abu Abbas Brigades. He adds, during our transportation, my wife called me to ask about me, so the gunmen took the phone and told her to go get my dead body. “We threw it to the al-Sailah.” “I learned after I was released that my wife passed out after that call.”

The other victim Adul-Jabbar said: “When they put me in the room of one of the houses in the Mujaliah neighborhood, they told me to recite the shahada - they meant that they would kill me - so one of them fired a bullet next to me on the wall. It was a difficult situation for me. He adds, “They treated us harshly while we were in the custody of the Abu Al-Abbas Brigades leadership. One night, the guards woke us up from our sleep at 2:00 am, so that Abu al-Abbas, the commander of the battalions, could visit us. So, he and one of the gunmen walked in and he was pointing his weapon at us. Abu Al-Abbas started asking the detainees about the reason for their detention, and when it was my turn, I told him that they detained me from the mosque. He promised me to discuss my arrest, but days passed and he did nothing. He added, after (28) days, we were transferred to the house of Abu al-Abbas and from there to the house of Arif Jamel, the deputy governor of Taiz.”

(13) One of Daesh (ISIS) members in Taiz

JOURNALISTS MOURAD, ELIAS AND GAMAL (PSEUDONYMS)

“SAM” investigated the incident and listened to journalists after their release, as armed men affiliated with Military Intelligence raided their home in the city center at midnight on Monday, August 19, 2019 and detained them and imprisoned them in the National Institute of Administrative Sciences building.

Murad said: “We heard violent knocks on the door. we opened, and the gunmen walked into the house and took our phones from our hands. They said that we were wanted for questioning. We asked them why we were not summoned during the day and we would go. But they took us in a car and took us to a room in the National Institute building. They started interrogating us in the late hours of the night and summoned each of us to a separate room. They asked me a number of questions about my profession, my relationship with the Emiratis, and my activity in the Emirates Red Crescent.”

Murad added: “They treated us harshly as we asked for water to our colleague Jamal, who has diabetes, and they only provided one bottle late at night. As for me and my colleague Elias, we stayed for 16 hours without water. As for the food, it was poor and caused us health problems, and it is the kind that we can’t stand to eat. Murad continues saying, “we used a small bathroom built of bricks for only four stacks and it was open to the courtyard of the cell and it smelled bad. Furthermore, water was coming out of this bathroom and reached the covers we slept on. They also prevented us from communicating with people outside the prison. He adds, before releasing us, they subjected us to filming and asked us to speak to praise the security services and their awakening in maintaining security and stability, so we did what we were ordered to do, and they released us on the fourth day of our detention.”

ABDUL HADI AL-MAHJRI 28 YEARS OLD

He was arrested from his home in Jabal Habashi by conscripts affiliated with the Special Forces and others from the Jabal Habashi Police at midnight on Wednesday, April 24, 2019.

“SAM” met Hizam (a pseudonym), the victim’s relative and he said: “Abdul-Hadi arrived to visit his uncle, and while they were sitting at night inside the house, it was surrounded by six security pickups that wanted to arrest Abdul-Hadi. He asked them for an arrest warrant, and they replied that it was a supreme directive because he was wanted by the security forces. So, they took him by force, and headed to the headquarters of the Special Security Forces in the Khayami area on the Taiz al-Turbah road.”

The witness added: “The second day, I went with the victim’s mother to the headquarters of the Special Security Forces to find out the reason for his

arrest, but the officials denied his presence and refused to give us information about his place of detention. After our insistence, they allowed his mother to visit him, and after two days we went to visit him, but the prison officials said that he was transferred to the city of Aden.”

“SAM” conveyed to the command of the Special Forces in Taiz the accusations made by the victim’s family and requested an explanation of the reason for the arrest of the victim and to know his fate, but the organization did not receive a response to its letter.

HUMANITARIAN ACTIVIST HAYKAL OSIORAN

He was detained three times during the year 2018 and accused the Abu Abbas Brigades of detaining him at the behest of Rashad al-Akhali, head of the Relief Subcommittee and Deputy Governor.

“SAM” met Osioran and he said: “The last detention began on Sunday, October 21, 2018, when three women entered my office requesting food baskets, so I took them to the office of the head of the relief committee, Engineer Rashad Al-Akhali. Meanwhile, the Director of Political Security, Abdul-Wahed Sarhan walked in. Then Rashad asked him to detain me. Sarhan’s escorts arrested me, covered my eyes, and took me to a private building whose location I do not know. He added, “I stayed there for ten days and my family didn’t know my whereabouts until I was released.”

Osioran talked about his second detention and said: “I left my house in Al-Madajer neighborhood on the morning of Sunday, July 1, 2018, and masked men in a car intercepted me. Then they took me, tied my hands and feet, and took me to a building whose location I do not know. they put me in the “basement” of the building and left me there for five days without water or food. He added, on the sixth day, one of the gunmen came and pointed his gun at me and said, “We will kill you today.” Then he threw a bag containing a bottle of water, rice, stew, and three loaves of bread, which I devoured because I was starving. After that they left me for three days. Then one of them came back and gave me some food and a bottle of water. The situation continued like this: they would leave me for days, and then bring water and food, in addition to threatening to liquidate me and throwing my body to the al-Sailah.”

Haikal adds: “I stayed in that prison for 41 days, suffering from hunger and from the shackles placed on my hands and feet. On the last day, armed men came to me and told me, “We will execute you.” Then they injected me, put me in a cloth bag, and carried me on their backs. After I regained consciousness,

I found myself in that bag. I managed to open it and get out. It was night time. I sat in my place not knowing where I was. In the morning it turned out that I was near my house, so I went back to it.”

Regarding his detention the first time, Haikal said: “Abu al-Abbas detained me in the brigade’s prison for (15) days because of a complaint submitted by leaders of the neighborhoods and at the behest of engineer Rashad al-Akhali, who was deluding Abu al-Abbas that I was loyal to the Houthi group. Al-Akhali himself then mediated for my release on the condition that I work under the umbrella of the Relief Subcommittee he chairs.”

“SAM” asked the engineer, Rashad Al-Akhali to respond to the accusations leveled at him by Osioran and to clarify what happened, but the organization did not receive a response from him.

PHOTOJOURNALIST TAHA SALEH

“SAM” investigated the incident and met him. It concluded that on the morning of Friday, October 18, 2019, he was filming with a family whose house was destroyed due to the war in Al-Jahmaliah neighbourhood when recruits in the 22nd Brigade Mika kidnapped him and transferred him to a prison in the Bazara neighbourhood, which has been witnessing fighting between government forces and Houthi forces.

The victim said: “I explained to the recruits that I am a journalist and showed them the pictures I had taken, but they pulled my camera and phone by force and held me in a dark room in a building next to the Muhammad Ali Othman School in that neighbourhood. They also prevented me from contacting my family. He added, “I lived in a state of anxiety and psychological pressure as the prison is in a military area. Meanwhile, my family did not know my whereabouts and weren’t used to my absence, especially on Friday.”

The victim adds: “I found a detainee in prison who told me that whoever enters it is not allowed to contact anyone, and he told me stories of people who were detained next to him for days without anyone knowing anything about them.” Taha Saleh said, I stayed in prison from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Then one of the military commanders in the brigade came and allowed me to call my family on the condition that I tell them that I am with one of my friends. Half an hour after that call, I was released and they asked me coldly to forgive them.”

EXAMPLES OF THE FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

ABDULLAH ALI (PSEUDONYM), 28 YEARS OLD

“SAM” met the Victim’s⁽¹⁴⁾ sister who said: “My brother was a recruit in the Abu al-Abbas Brigades and worked in the Brigades’ Sina Police Department. One night in October 2017, my brother didn’t come home as usual. We asked his friends, and they told us that he had been arrested alongside Hashem al-San’ani from the Islah party’s forces. She added, “After three months, I went to the prison of 22nd Brigade Mika in the Taiz Tourist Club where I met an officer and he told me that he was being held by them, but they released him.” I went there for the second time and recruits in the brigade told me that they had sent my brother and Hashem al-San’ani to Aden. The third time they said they had sent him to the military police. I felt that they wanted to mislead me.”

The victim’s sister added: “About a year later, my nephew met a prisoner who was being held in al-Sa’alik Brigade prison in the Central Organization for Control and Accounting building. He said that he had seen Abdullah in that prison. He did not want to be known as the source of this information. We met Azzam Al-Farhan, a leader in the al-Sa’alik Brigade, and he denied the existence of my brother. We tried to meet with Sadiq Sarhan, the commander of the brigade, but he was avoiding meeting us. She said that there was a high possibility that her brother was being arrested along with Hashem al-Sana’ani, and that the 22nd Brigade Mika was responsible for his disappearance as his fate remained unknown.

HABIB KHALED (PSEUDONYM), 16 YEARS OLD

“SAM” met Habib’s⁽¹⁵⁾ father who said: “Habib was working on a motorcycle and on the afternoon of Saturday, March 25, 2017, he left the house and has not return yet. We searched for him in hospitals, police stations, faction prisons, and military brigades, but we did not find him. A few days later, one of my friends was able to reach the headquarters of the Islamic State in the Samail market and met one of the gunmen belonging to the leader in the organization, Hisham al-Raymi, who reassured them that Habib was with them and he was in good health. Then he ordered them to return after three days, but when they returned and met that gunman, and he denied what he said.”

Habib’s father added: “The judge of the Hasm Brigades told me that ISIS

(14) We conducted the meeting at her house on 5th December 2018

(15) We conducted the interview on November 25, 2018

is recruiting young men and sending them to fight in Al-Bayda Governorate. Therefore, I began to suspect as Habib, a week before his disappearance, attended religious lessons at Al-Saeed Mosque, along with another person named Mirab Al-Shamiri, one of the escorts of Sheikh Muhammad Al-Dhunhani⁽¹⁶⁾, the preacher of Al-Saeed Mosque. I was asking Mirab about Habib, and he denied knowing what happened to him, but I suspected that he had a hand in his disappearance as I later learned that Mirab was fighting with ISIS in Al-Bayda Governorate, and he was sitting with Habib in private before his disappearance in a way that I was suspicious of.

EZZALDEEN RAWEH (PSEUDONYM), 23 YEARS OLD

One of the fighters of what was known as the popular resistance. "SAM" met his parents and an eyewitness⁽¹⁷⁾. His father said: "On the morning of Saturday, July 27, 2017, Waleed al-Zaboud, a conscript in the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, came to my house and asked my son to join him for food, so he went out with him and from that moment he hasn't returned. We contacted al-Zaboud, but he turned off his phone. Two days later, he answered our call and said that Ezzaldeen had gone to the city of al-Turbah and would return. Then my wife and I went to meet al-Zaboud who said that Ezzaldeen was a spy with the Islah party and wanted to kill Abu al-Waleed al-San'ani, the emir of ISIS in Taiz. After that, he referred us to Ayman al-Baburi, one of the armed men in the brigades, since he was the one who investigated him. He continued saying, "my son in law went to look for Ezzaldeen and he was kidnapped and detained in the ISIS prison in the Suq Al-Samil neighbourhood for a period of two weeks. After his release, son in law told us that he had seen Ezzaldeen in that prison.

Ezzaldeen's father adds: "I went to meet Abu Al-Abbas, the commander of the brigades, as he is the official responsible for the gunmen who kidnapped my son and I found Adel al-Ezzi who said. "Consider your son a stone washed away by floods." He added, "One of the detainees saw my son in the Brigades' headquarters prison six months after his kidnapping, and another detainee saw him about a year later while he was being held in a prison affiliated with the Abu Abbas Brigades in the Al-Kadaha area." He adds, "I sent a number of mediators who had contact to the leader of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades to release my son, but he replied that my son had been killed in al-Kadaha, and sometimes he replied that he did not know what happened to him.

The organization had asked the commander of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades about the accusations levelled against his brigades for the disappearance of Ezzaldeen, but it did not receive a response from him.

(16) Al-Dhunhani was killed inside Al-Saeed Mosque in mysterious circumstances in May 2018

(17) We conducted that interview on November 8, 2018

SAEED FADEL AND YASSER RAED (PSEUDONYMS), 18, 20 YEARS OLD

“SAM” met the relatives of the two victims⁽¹⁸⁾, and Saeed Fadel’s mother said: “We were sitting inside our house in al-Askari neighbourhood on the evening of Thursday, August 9, 2018, when armed policemen led by Yasser al-Aqel stormed the house and assaulted me, my husband and two of my daughters and harassed them. Then they detained us all and took us to a house in the Bazara neighbourhood, which is adjacent to the fire line. They did not release us until the morning of the second day whereas my son and his friend were not released. They arrested my son and his friend on the accusation that they were fighters with the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, even though they had nothing to do with anyone. Saeed’s mother added, “We met with military leaders, including Yahya al-Raymi and Wahib al-Huri, the two leaders in the 22nd Brigade Mika, and they said that they did not know the fate of my son and his friend.” She said that she mediated a lot of personalities to search for her son, and that she obtained information from a person close to the Taiz Axis about the presence of her son and his friend.”

The mother of the disappeared added: “We submitted complaints and demands to the command of the Taiz axis, the Public Prosecution and the Military Police Command, but we did not receive any remedy. In the military police, they told us that they imprisoned Yasser al-Aqel for three days and released him, but I was not able to reach my son and his friend, and I do not know his fate until today. My health has worsened and the condition of his father, who suffers from chronic diseases, has deteriorated. My son was a young civilian who had nothing to do with the warring parties.”

The organization obtained documents issued by the Attorney General and the Chief Public Prosecutor addressed to the Director of National Security, the Director of Political Security, the Director of Military Intelligence, and the Commander of the Military Police requesting them to report the fate of the two victims. Military Intelligence replied that it did not know their fate.

(18) Five separate meetings were held, the first on September 20, 2019 and the last on May 16, 2022

EIGHTH SECTION:

PRIVATE PRISONS

The organization monitored unofficial detention centres in areas under government authorities, Houthi group control areas in Taiz, and UAE-backed joint forces control areas on the West Coast.

In areas under the control of government forces, the organization monitored (28) prisons during the reporting period, (21) of which prisons were closed, and (7) prisons remained open at the time of writing the report. Among those prisons, there were (6) prisons run by the Abu Abbas Brigades, which are the Brigades leadership prison in the Hayel Complex School for Girls, the Political Security Building prison, a prison in the Governor's Rest House, a prison in Al-Shaibani House, a prison in the al-Shaab School in Al-Sharja, and a prison in Al-Kadha Dispensary. All of these prisons have been closed.

The report monitored (5) prisons run by extremist organizations in Taiz, which are a prison in the building of the Arwa School for Girls, in the building of the Al-Hamza School, a prison in the building of the Tariq bin Ziyad School, a prison in the building of Hayel Saeed Anam Associates and Welfare Corporation, and a prison in the building of the House of Al-Humayqani in the Souk Al-Samil neighbourhood. All of them were closed after the expulsion of these organizations by government forces.

The report also recorded (5) prisons run by 22nd Brigade Mika, which are Al-Masbah Park prison, the National Institute for Administrative Sciences building, the Al-Saeed College building, and the National Institute building in partnership with Military Intelligence, and a prison in one of the buildings next to the Muhammad Ali Othman School. Three of these were closed while the last two are still open.

The organization monitored (3) prisons run by the command of the Taiz Axis, which are the prison of the Al-Nahda School, the prison of the former Public Funds Prosecution building, and the prison of the Saba'a School building. The first was closed and the last two weren't.

It also monitored (3) prisons belonging to the 35th Armoured Brigade, namely: the Brigade Command prison in the Al Ain area, the Jabal Habashi Police Department prison before 2017, and a prison in one of the buildings in Al-Selw District. The latter two were closed and the first remained as it is.

The report recorded 3 prisons belonging to the Hasm Brigades, namely the prison of the al-Shaab School building, the prison of Al-Saqr Sports Club, and the prison of the New Medical College building, all of which were closed.

The report also monitored (3) prisons. The first one is run by the 17th Infantry Brigade in the Social Welfare House building, and the second is run by the Political Security Agency in the former Future Hospital building on Al Mogtaribeen Street while another prison that was run by the Security Committee, the Popular Resistance Council and the 170th Air Defense Brigade in the Bakathir school building. The first and second are still intact and have not been closed yet.

“SAM” sent letters to the Chief Public Prosecutor, the command of the Taiz Axis, the governor of Taiz, the former commander of the 22nd Brigade Mika, the command of the Abu al-Abbas Brigades, the command of the 35th Armoured Brigade, and the director of the Political Security Apparatus, inquiring from them about the measures they took to close those prisons. However, it did not receive any responses, except for the command of the Taiz Axis, who denied that the Taiz Axis possessed places of detention, except for one prison in the Public Funds Prosecution building, which is used as a reserve for war fighters. The axis acknowledged the existence of disciplinary detention places within the military brigades that specialize in military cases and are supervised by the Military Prosecution.

NINETH SECTION:

LOOTING OF HOMES AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES

“SAM” has documented incidents related to the looting of homes, real estate, and private lands. It believes that these actions are the result of the security deterioration in Taiz, and the government forces’ disregard for the protection of civilians and their property. The armed factions and groups have practiced this act since the beginning of the fighting in Taiz with the Houthi group. The organization obtained testimonies confirming the involvement of leaders in the government forces in this act. It is also noted that most of the victims of this type of violation are former government leaders, merchants and residents who have been displaced from the city, and vulnerable local residents who are unable to confront these actions and are not able to resort to law enforcement agencies either because of their weakness or their financial inability to follow up. The organization concluded that a number of house burglaries were accompanied by or resulted in hostilities and other crimes, most notably extrajudicial killings.

The report obtained documents confirming the existence of official demands to investigate cases of looting of homes and an order to the military and security authorities to take legal measures on individual cases. It also received a directive from the deputy governor of Taiz to the specialists in the security authorities to write down the citizens’ reports whose homes were looted to act in accordance with the law and work to restore them to their owners.

“SAM” contacted the Deputy Governors of Taiz, Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Sabri and Sheikh Aref Jamel, who are members of the government committee for inventory and return of property, in addition to lawyer Osama Al-Ameri, the committee’s secretary, to find out what the committee has found about looted houses and the homes they have recovered. Dr. Al-Sabri responded by apologizing for not responding due to his travel outside Yemen. Upon his return, we tried to verify from him by contacting him via the same previous WhatsApp, but unfortunately, he did not answer our question. On the other hand, lawyer Al-Ameri confirmed that there were previous complaints that have abated recently, ‘the monitoring was stopped six months ago, while we sent more than one message to Sheikh Aref Jamel’s phone number but unfortunately, he did not respond to us.

EXAMPLES

The execution of Essa, the killing of Essam, Khaled and Abdo al-Hareq and the abuse of the family because of their defence of a piece of land

The incident of abuse suffered by the “Al-Hareq” family is a testimony to the security deterioration in Taiz and a summary of the burglaries of homes and private real estate. “SAM” investigated the incident, listened to eyewitnesses, examined the signs of abuse and obtained documents.

On the evening of Tuesday, August 10, 2021, three members of the family of “Muhammad Ali Al-Hareq”, Essam, Khaled and Abdo, were killed while Akram Ahmed Al-Hareq was wounded near their homes in the Bir Basha area during a robbery on their land carried out by a military battalion commander in the 145th Brigade in Taiz, Majed Al-Araj and gunmen followed him. Al-Araj and one of his escorts were killed during the robbery.

An hour after their killing, more than twenty armed men appeared on military vehicles led by Akram Shaalan, as well as a security vehicle belonging to the emergency police next to the homes of the “Al-Hareq “. They broke into three houses, threw bombs at them, and looted small and expensive items, as well as family money and papers, accompanied by threatening, intimidating and treating women and children crudely, to search for the men of that family for the purpose of killing or kidnapping them. However, the elderly and young men of that family had managed to flee their homes for fear of the oppression that would happen to them.

Members of the al-Hareq family sought the help of the police and military leaders to save their families and get the gunmen out of their homes, but these services and military leaders did nothing although the emergency police headquarters is located approximately 100 meters from the location of the incident. Eyewitnesses told the organization that conscripts in a security car belonging to this security unit came to the place and saw the gunmen tampering with the homes of the “Al-Hareq family” and did not move a finger. Victims of the Al-Hareq family accused this security unit of supporting those gunmen.

On the morning of the second day, August 11, gunmen affiliated with “Al-Araj” also came and stormed and searched residential houses in the neighborhood in search of young men and men of the “Al-Hareq” family. They found the young Essa Al-Hareq, so they kidnapped him and transferred him to a special prison in a building inside the facilities of the Al-Jabaleen Dam, where the military battalion led by Majed Al-Araj resides. Then they executed him, moved his body and threw it next to a hospital.

The gunmen of Al-Araj continued to search for the rest of the al-Hareq family, who managed to escape. Those who remained in the homes, women and children, were threatened and abused. These gunmen also prevented the women of that family from seeing the bodies of the victims in the morgue of the Al-Thawra Governmental Hospital in the city. Then on the morning of Saturday, August 14, a security force was able to transfer the women, protected by vehicles and soldiers, to the morgue in order to enable them to see the bodies of their relatives, in the presence of the organization's researcher.

THE ROBBERY OF SHAMSAN SAEED AL-QIRSHI'S HOUSE

The house is located in the center of the city of Taiz, near the Nema Rassam School. It consists of (7) apartments. Officers in the 170th Air Defense Brigade and 145th Infantry Brigade robbed it. The organization obtained documents in which the sons of Shamsan al-Qirshi appeal to the military and civilian leaders to expel the gunmen as the so-called Mustafa al-Tayyar, Sadeq al-Yafrusi and Muammar al-Maqlu' seized (6) apartments in the house in the middle of 2015 on the pretext that they overlooked the Rassam School, which was used by the Taiz axis as a military training headquarters. Moreover, they brought their families to the apartments they seized, leaving only one apartment for the al-Qirshi's children.

Since March 2019, sons of Al-Qirshi have submitted a number of demands and appeals to officials in Taiz Governorate, leaders of the Taiz axis, and the command of the 170th Air Defense Brigade. After some trouble, they were able to receive (3) apartments in the house, while the officers refused to leave (3) other apartments. The sons of Shamsan al-Qirshi were unable to force the officers to leave. A witness told the organization that the Taiz officials didn't paid attention to their complaints in order to expel the looters of their house.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF YEMEN AND THE MILITARY PROSECUTOR

- Use their statutory powers to open a comprehensive investigation into all the cases and incidents included in this report and with all the people whose names have been mentioned, and everyone involved in committing violations, crimes and insecurity in areas affiliated with the Yemeni government in Taiz.
- Exert pressure on the Public Prosecution Office in Taiz in order to exercise its role effectively, to advance its legal roles, to avoid the state of negativity in its work, and to open serious investigations into all the cases and files included in the report

TO THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT

- Seriously work to integrate all military and security formations in Taiz and link them to the Ministries of Defense and Interior, including the integration of military forces on the western coast of the governorate.
- End the presence of any armed militia outside the legal and official frameworks.
- Give special importance to Taiz Governorate by supporting and rehabilitating the infrastructure of civil and security government agencies.
- Remove all those accused and responsible for fuelling the conflict in Taiz from all positions they hold, as well as those accused of committing human rights violations and uphold the principle of accountability with all human rights violators.

TO THE GOVERNMENT FORCES AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN TAIZ

- Immediately release all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, close all private prisons, and place prisons affiliated with military brigades under the authority and supervision of the judiciary.
- Immediate cease all forms of inhumane treatment that occurs in prisons.
- Compensate the victims of human rights violations.
- Work to inventory and hand over all looted buildings, lands and real estate to their owners, work to compensate those affected, and stop all violators and looters of land and real estate.

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- Stop all forms of support and coverage received by armed gangs from leaders in government forces.
 - Arrest all the leaders and members of armed gangs and those who violate the security and bring them to account, and protect the population from all their actions.
 - Bring all those accused of committing crimes from government forces and police agencies to justice.
 - Rehabilitate the government forces on the principles of human rights and humanitarian law, and Yemeni laws related to the exercise of their roles.
 - To the United Arab Emirates
 - Stop providing logistical, military and media support to any faction or military forces in areas affiliated with government forces in Taiz
 - Seriously work with the Yemeni government to integrate all military forces on the western coast of Taiz with other government units and link them directly to the Yemeni government.

TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES

- Completely stop all forms of interference and influence on leaders, military and security forces, and civil institutions, and remove influences and political conflicts from them.
- Embrace a media discourse that unites government forces and contributes to creating a conciliatory atmosphere away from polarization and entrenchment.
- Stop the hate speech and incitement espoused by their media outlets and parties' affiliates.



TAIZ..DISTURBED SECURITY

A HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DOCUMENTING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IN THE YEMENI
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS OF TAIZ

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