

THEY ARE A DANGER

Monitoring hate speech issued by parties to the conflict
Armed forces during the conflict in Yemen

December 2023





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Armed forces during the conflict in Yemen

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Who is Sam?

An independent, non-profit human rights organization based in Geneva that began its activity in January 2016

I obtained a work permit in December 2017. Seeking to defend human rights in The Middle East and Yemen in particular, and the delivery of human rights violations to...

Decision-making institutions and effective and influential international organizations have been exposed to many...

Campaigns of distortion and incitement, as well as piracy of its platforms, by the parties to the Yemeni war because of

It exposed the crimes they committed and issued dozens of reports in Arabic and English

And human rights statements documenting war and human rights violations in Yemen

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Introduction

Hate speech is considered one of the major concerns that have emerged in Arab media, especially in countries experiencing internal disturbances and political instability. This type of discourse has become a daily presence in published, audio, and visual media, as well as in content circulated on social media. It represents a clear violation of relevant international conventions and norms.

Local and international reports have shown the development of hate speech in southern Yemen, indicating an overlapping relationship between real-life hatred and media and political discourse. This is in light of the repercussions caused by political rivalries within Yemen and attempts to divide the country through the control of politically motivated parties with religious backgrounds over large areas and subjugating them under their rule. This, in addition to the subsequent events triggered by inflammatory rhetoric, contributes to the destruction of social fabric and lays the groundwork for long-term conflict.

Monitoring the discourse of incitement and hate speech in the media is of great importance because these traits cannot build democracy; instead, they pose a direct threat to it. In addition, they serve as essential tools in creating divisions and discord within societies, both internally and externally. They represent a real threat to the democratic system, public freedoms, human rights, and a violation of international conventions that criminalize the use of such language in media discourse, considering it a crime that should be held accountable for its perpetrators.

Through this report, SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties seeks to shed light on the discourse of incitement and hate speech in Yemen, particularly the discourse emanating from political groups such as the Houthis and the Transitional Council, as well as the supporting countries involved in the ongoing conflict in Yemen, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The report aims to establish a link between the intensity of these discourses and the escalation of violence within Yemen, as well as the evolving forms of hate speech that have expanded to affect various aspects of life in the country.

Part One: Legal and Conceptual Framework

A-Hate speech in Yemeni legislation

The Yemeni law lacks explicit and specific provisions that criminalize hate speech. However, there are general provisions that address the issue. Article 56 of the draft new constitution issued in January 2015 states the following: "The state works to consolidate the values of brotherhood, tolerance, and coexistence, and rejects the culture of hatred, glorification of wars, sectarian, ethnic, and regional incitement. It also criminalizes excommunication of Muslims, whether individuals or groups, and prohibits the contempt, insult, and defamation of the Islamic religion and all divine religions, as well as the disrespect of prophets and messengers."

Article 136 of Law No. 12 of 1994 concerning Crimes and Penalties states the following: "Anyone who disseminates false or malicious news, statements, rumors, or any provocative propaganda with the intention of disturbing public security, causing terror among people, or causing harm to public interest shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years."

Additionally, Article 194 states: "Anyone who openly incites to contempt towards a sect of people or promotes the domination of a sect, causing a disturbance to public peace, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or a fine."

Article 103 of Law No. 25 of 1990 concerning Press and Publications emphasizes the importance of avoiding anything that fuels division among members of society and encourages hatred. It states the following: "All those working in the printed, audio, and visual media, especially those responsible for radio and television, newspaper owners, responsible editors, printing press owners, publishing houses, and journalists, are committed to refraining from printing, publishing, circulating, and broadcasting anything that incites tribal, sectarian, racial, regional, or lineage-based animosities, spreads discord and division among members of society, or incites excommunication. Additionally, they should refrain from anything that violates public morals, infringes upon the dignity of individuals and personal freedoms, promotes personal defamation and slander, as well as incitement to violence and terrorism."

B. Hate speech in international law

- Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination." This article emphasizes the principle of equality before the law and the right to be protected from discrimination and any incitement to discrimination as enshrined in the declaration.
- Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states the following:
 - 1- Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
 - 2- Any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence shall be prohibited by law.
- Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination obliges states to condemn "all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one color or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination." It further commits states to take immediate and positive measures aimed at eliminating all incitement to such discrimination and any acts.
- In its General Recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating hate speech, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination emphasizes various aspects, including the role of hate speech in processes that lead to mass human rights violations and genocide, as well as in situations of conflict. It indicates that this speech can originate from individuals or groups and can be disseminated orally, in print, or through electronic media (such as the internet and social media platforms), as well as through non-verbal forms of expression (such as symbols, images, and racist behaviors in public gatherings). The Committee emphasizes that the presentation of media content targeting ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, and other groups should be based on principles of respect, fairness, and avoidance of stereotypes. It provides specific recommendations, including the adoption of appropriate legislation in line with international standards, the establishment of codes of ethics and laws for journalism, the promotion of media pluralism, and facilitating minority access to and ownership of media outlets.

C. What is hate speech?

The European Council defines hate speech as "any discourse that is based on verbal violence, aiming at the moral killing of the other and excluding them, through incitement to murder, violence, defamation, insult, discrimination, racism, intellectual bigotry, and arrogance." It further states that hate speech typically serves as an important tool to stimulate and direct emotions towards a particular direction, creating a behavior and culture rooted in racism and discrimination against the targets of the speech. The danger of this speech lies particularly in the presence of media platforms and an environment conducive to this type of discourse. Hatred is often formed, fueled, perpetuated, and directed by specific individuals or groups against individuals and different groups that deviate from the prevailing majority in terms of ethnicity, language, or religion. This is often due to political reasons or entrenched discrimination that has persisted over time. Hate messages can find fertile ground in societies experiencing broader social, economic, or political problems or divisions. The root causes of hatred often lie in purely ethnic or religious differences.

Hatred often stems from broader societal flaws, including lack of access to resources or injustice in their distribution, political bias, corruption, deficiencies in fair and inclusive governance, and real or perceived ethnic or religious favoritism, which further erode trust, breed suspicion, and fuel anger. It can be inferred that when inclusive governance, equality, and human rights prevail, and when societies place trust in their leadership, there is less societal fragmentation and concerns about minority rights.

Many countries, including Yemen, still lack local laws to combat discrimination and hate speech. Even with existing laws, law enforcement often suffers from weaknesses, and the number of cases brought to courts is often limited. States should not quickly and easily assume that minorities feel safe solely because there are constitutions and laws that regulate minority rights on paper. It is necessary for countries to find ways to understand the feelings and concerns of minorities and to provide the necessary institutional attention to minority issues, bodies, and consultative processes.

Part Two: Hate speech: causes and manifestations



A- Causes of Hate Speech

Yemen suffers from many reasons that drive the spread of hate speech in it, and they can be summarized as follows:



1- Armed conflict:

The armed political conflict over power in Yemen, both in the north and the south, has contributed to fueling hate speech and societal division, without a legal reconciliation process that contributes to healing the national memory. The armed conflict that erupted in Yemen since 2014 has intensified this discourse, spreading and diversifying it. The conflicting parties utilize racist and sectarian rhetoric to encourage their followers to engage in fighting and discrimination against others.

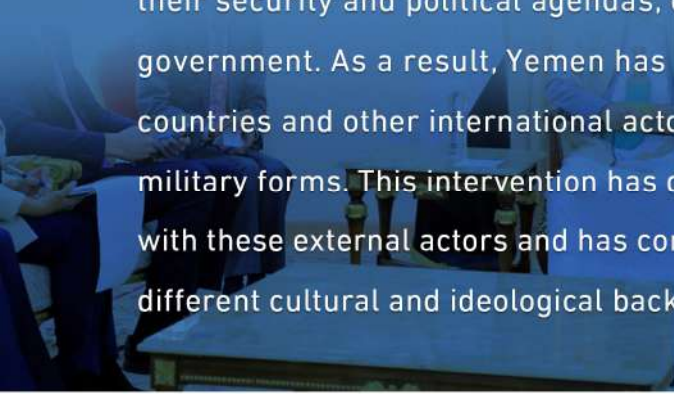
2- Poverty and unemployment:

Poverty and unemployment are among the prominent issues faced by Yemen, leading to anger and frustration among large segments of society. The widespread corruption within the political class and influential individuals has further exacerbated the societal division, creating disparities in income levels and fostering a class divide within the community. As a result, some individuals have resorted to using hate speech as a means to express their anger and discontentment.



3- External Intervention:

Yemen is characterized by its strategic geographic location, making it a key pillar in international security. This has led regional and international powers to prioritize Yemen in their security and political agendas, especially given the weakness of the central Yemeni government. As a result, Yemen has witnessed significant intervention from neighboring countries and other international actors, manifesting in financial, political, intellectual, and military forms. This intervention has deepened the conflict between Yemeni factions aligned with these external actors and has contributed to an increase in hate speech stemming from different cultural and ideological backgrounds of the intervening countries in Yemeni affairs.



4- Media:

Media openness and the establishment of satellite channels and local radio stations have fueled hate speech by adopting and promoting the point of view of the parties to the conflict in Yemen, which contributed to the division of society, and the spread of terms that promote hatred and exclusion against the other party.



5- Legislative vacuum:

Hate speech in Yemen poses a significant threat to social peace and national unity in the country. International and local efforts need to exert more efforts to confront this threat and promote dialogue and understanding among all parties.

B. Forms of hate speech

The hate speech or incitement takes on various forms depending on the environment from which it originates and the targeted individuals. However, what unites these diverse forms is that they serve as the core element for dividing society and spreading the spirit of racism, whether it is religious, geographical, or political. This deepens societal divisions in the countries where such discourse spreads. The following are practical examples of hate speech models mentioned in the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák:

- **Calling for killing and violence:** This category includes all words, images, drawings, and media materials that serve as explicit or implicit incitement, or speech that pushes, justifies, or encourages the targeted audience to engage in violent behavior or commit acts of violence.
- **Discrimination and racism:** This model encompasses any published media discourse that promotes racist and discriminatory values based on race, gender, religion, belief, or intellectual affiliation.
- **Incitement:** This refers to all forms of urging and encouraging negative actions, and requesting their execution or adoption, such as incitement to revenge or incitement against others. This type of incitement is considered one of the worst forms because it is built on convictions that reach the level of conviction and belief in falsehood, and a persistent defense of it.
- **Stigmatization:** This includes all forms of diminishing the value of others and labeling them with negative phrases. This kind of defamation leads to the individual's social or political non-acceptance and turns them into an outcast in their community, causing psychological and social imbalances.
- **Insults:** This category includes all offensive phrases that undermine human dignity, carrying meanings of humiliation, derogation, and belittlement ,
towards the other party.

It is important to note that media and societal discourse in Yemen encompassed all the aforementioned models, whether through media outlets or during political or tribal party meetings. These factors have been among the main causes that led to an increase in violence and violations against Yemeni individuals. The discourse of these factions often focused on racial division between the inhabitants of Yemen, particularly between the North and the South. This was particularly evident with the Houthi rebels and separatist groups who engaged in a fierce war that resulted in the division of Yemen into camps and areas of influence for the conflicting parties.

Part Three: Fields of Spread of Hate Speech



Indeed, all parties involved in the conflict in Yemen, since its inception, have resorted to hate speech and incitement, utilizing their intellectual, religious, and historical tools. They have mobilized all means and resources to justify their actions and delegitimize the other side. This has filled people's minds with ideas of revenge, tribal tendencies, and racial divisions. These factors have had a profound impact in exacerbating violations against civilians, particularly children and women .



1-Media

Hate speech constitutes one of the most important tools in the current political conflict in Yemen, which has been ongoing since 2011. Communication and media outlets have been influenced by the state of division and violent conflict. They have become dangerous platforms where the language of hatred and mutual violence between the conflicting parties dominates their communicative discourse. This has had a profound impact on further dividing the society and increasing fragmentation 2.

The events in Yemen have had a direct impact on the media language and the media landscape. Similarly, the discourse of hatred has been reflected in these events, leading to the exacerbation of sectarian sentiments in particular. This exacerbation involves the rejection of the other and the

promotion of incitement based on characteristics such as ethnicity, color, geographic region, tribal affiliation, national origin, gender, political ideology, or religious sect 3.

In Yemen, the majority of media outlets are often criticized for their content filled with hate speech

and incitement to violence, which has led to the absence of peace as a cherished value and a neglected culture in the professional performance of these media outlets and their operators. Furthermore, it can be said that peace is absent as a concept and value in media legislation and professional codes of conduct that have been established for decades. In a country experiencing successive rounds of violence and lacking true and lasting stability in its recent history, the discussion of the media's role in promoting peace is often overlooked in the literature pertaining to this vital sector in society 4.

According to the 2021 report by the Observatory for Media Freedoms, the Yemeni media has been directly affected by the war in Yemen. Its role has recently been characterized as inflammatory, inciting, and biased, with only a few examples supporting peace and coexistence. The Yemeni media has witnessed polarization by the conflicting parties, with their discourse often inciting hatred, denigration, and the absence of differing opinions. Many media outlets in Yemen are subject to the influence of the warring parties, leading them to take positions against each other based on the course of armed operations. As the intensity of the armed conflict increases, so does the intensity of the inflammatory and inciting media discourse. Media outlets owned by the conflicting parties have transformed into tools for mobilization and propaganda, contributing to prolonging the duration of the war and complicating the situation 5.

The results of a recent analytical study on hate speech in the websites of Al-Sahwa Net, Al-Masirah

Net, and Aden Time during July 2021 revealed that the sample (1337) contained repeated instances of hate speech, with an average of (7) repetitions of hate speech terms per news article. This is an alarmingly high rate in terms of the prevalence of hate speech and violence in the content of these three websites and the intensity of their use in media discourse. All the hate speech terms had deep religious, political, ethical, and social connotations. They included describing the other as a militia, accounting for 45.1%, and accusing them of rebellion and illegitimacy, which justifies their deterrence and subjugation by force. In second place, there was stigmatization with terrorism and affiliation with extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Takfiris, accounting for 16.2%. Thirdly, there was stigmatization with collaboration, betrayal, and subordination to foreign forces, accounting for 9.1%. In fourth place, there was stigmatization of the other with a discriminatory regional character, such as invaders, occupiers, northerners, and southerners, accounting for 8.2%. The hate speech also included terms such as "Brotherhood," "corrupt," "criminal," "country thieves and plunderers," "mercenaries," and "coup plotters" 6.

2 Almadaniya, November 16, 2021 <https://almadaniyamag.com/ar/2021/11/16/war-journalism-yemen>

3 Pluralism July 2019

4 Yemeni Media Center September 2021

5 View the full report at the link: <https://2u.pw/jZov0f>.

6 Almadaniya, November 16, 2021 <https://almadaniyamag.com/ar/2021/11/16/war-journalism-yemen>

The survey, which included 92 male and female journalists, found that 96.7% believe that the media propagates violence, hatred, and fuels conflict in Yemen. It also revealed that 94.6% believe that inflammatory discourse has contributed to widening the gap between the people of the north and the people of the south. The survey, conducted by journalist Bassem Ghabar and published on Al-Mashhad website, further explained that 60.9% see incitement in the media as high, while 33.7% consider it moderate, and only 5.4% say it is low. It also highlighted that social media platforms are the primary source of misleading and inflammatory information, according to 64.1% of respondents, followed by news websites at 18.5%, television channels at 16.3%, and radio stations with 1.1% ranking last 7.



2-Social Media

Yemenis have been engaged in verbal battles on social media platforms and online spaces in general since 2011 and up to the present time. With each passing day, these battles have escalated in intensity to the point where they become uncontrollable. In many cases, they surpass mere exchanges of insults and arguments and evolve into hate-filled and inciteful speeches that lead to heinous crimes and violent practices on the ground.

The war has contributed to the proliferation of hate speech, giving rise to derogatory and demeaning terms that were previously uncommon. It has also revived old terms and brought them back to the forefront of the conflict scene. In this context, the Digital Rights Project at SAM Organization has documented some of these terms used by the conflicting parties and their supporters against their opponents. These terms are used in a derogatory and demeaning context, and some are used in a discriminatory and condescending manner.

Term	Target
Mercenary/ agent/ traitor/ Daesh/ Takfiri/ hypocrite, the remnants of Al-Ahbash/ the remnants of the Turks	Terms used by the Houthis on their opponents and dissenters of opinion and belief
Hashhashshi/ dynasty/ Rafidhi/ Florid/ Magi/ Persian	Terms used by the Houthis on their opponents and dissenters of opinion and belief
Acquit / Himairi / Qahtani /	Terms used to distinguish Yemenis on the basis of their inherent belonging to Yemeni land
Southern/ Harakshi/ separatist/ Arab/ UAE agents/ Lahouj	Terms used by some residents of the northern governorates, against others from the southern governorates
Dehbashi/ Burgholi/ Northern/ Zaidis	Terms used by residents of southern governorates to others from the northern governorates
Arab 48 / Dome Triangle / Monkeys / Village Owners / Saqlaba / Saqlib	Discriminatory terms used by some residents of the southern governorates on others within the southern geographical framework
Plateau owners / Matlaa owners / Manzil owners	Discriminatory terms based on geographical affiliation, used by some residents of the northern governorates, against others from the same framework
Ikhung/ Ikhwanji	It refers to the followers of the "Islah Party" and sometimes used against those who have nothing to do with the party
Afashi/ Afafish/ Dang	Pejorative words given to supporters of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh
Zanbeel / Akfi	It refers to supporters of the "Houthi group" from the tribes

It appears that sectarian violence, whether perpetrated in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, which have been torn apart by wars, or the incidents that disrupt the usual calm in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, elicits a remarkable response on the internet. Videos and live images quickly spread on Twitter, often accompanied by inhumane language that fuels division and discord. Emotions and reactions intensify as conflicts are portrayed as existential battles between religious groups, heightening perceived threats and holding all religious partners responsible for the atrocities committed by small minorities. This information is based on a report prepared by researcher Alexandra Siegel for the Carnegie Middle East Center, dated December 20, 2015. 8.



Part Four: Parties to the Conflict and Hate Speech



First, the Houthis

1- Legalization of hatred and discrimination

A- The intellectual document. Establishing hatred



The intellectual document of the Houthi group, declared on February 13, 2012, is considered one of the most dangerous documents that contradict the values of equality and constitute a provocation to international conventions and treaties. Observers believe that it perpetuates racism, classism, sectarianism, racial discrimination, and ethnic discrimination, even after the disappearance of ethnic nationalism and racial discrimination in the modern era.

Indeed, this document is considered a regressive and intellectual, cultural, political, and religious regression. It promotes racism and serves as a catalyst for hatred within the country, fueling sectarian conflicts and undermining national identity and the principles of coexistence and tolerance that Yemen had made significant progress in during the modern era.

According to the Houthi group, the intellectual document is considered a constitution and a creed that supersedes Yemeni constitutions and laws in terms of its value and commitment. This document has legitimized the doctrine of eliminating the "other" and asserting superiority over them, even going as far as eradicating them through military combat.

Thabet Al-Ahmedi states, "The most dangerous aspect of this document, as stated within its text, is that it has linked the authority of their lineage to the Quran, making it one of the main pillars of the religion. This means that anyone who does not submit to the concept of this authority and does not recognize it is not considered a Muslim, as they openly declare

in their speeches and beliefs, starting from their first leader, Yahya Al-Rassi, in the third century Hijri until Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi. Consequently, they consider it permissible to shed the blood, seize the wealth, and violate the honor of those who do not conform to their ideology. This religious grounding of hatred justifies all the actions carried out by this group, including wars, invasions, looting, killings, bombings, destruction, and the eradication of dissenters and opponents, which they have implemented in Yemen after the issuance of this document. They have divided the people into two halves: a minority that believes in their ideology and follows them, seizing all the resources of the state for themselves and depriving the rest of the people, and a majority that does not believe in it, which constitutes the vast majority of the population and is the one paying the price today in terms of death, looting, famine, displacement, diseases, poverty, and ignorance."

Indeed, this document, through the concept of authority, considers itself as divinely ordained and asserts its right to rule as a divine right. It claims to be chosen by God based on lineage, race, and ideology, considering itself the best among all people and placing its lineage above humanity. It imposes the worship and reverence of its authority upon Yemenis through the force of terrorism. Consequently, it utilizes any means necessary to achieve its goals, following the Machiavellian principle of "the ends justify the means."

Indeed, the danger of this matter is not limited to Yemenis alone but extends to the world due to the sectarian and racial conflicts and tendencies it fosters. These conflicts spread like wildfire among humanity, causing immense damage and destruction.

The second dangerous aspect of this document is the concept of exclusivity, as they state in the document: "We believe that Allah has chosen the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and made them guides for the Ummah (Muslim community) and the inheritors of the Book after the Prophet until the Day of Judgment. He prepares, in every era, someone who is a beacon for His servants and capable of leading and uplifting the Ummah in all its spheres. Indeed, with every innovation that arises after me that threatens Islam, there will be a guardian from my household entrusted with proclaiming the truth, illuminating it, and repelling the plots of the plotters. So, take heed, O people of insight, and rely on Allah." Their methodology to establish and appoint this exclusivity is based on the methodology of the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

This issue perpetuates conflicts and wars throughout history, granting them divine authority and dominance over others. It reinforces a culture of hatred and grants them a demeaning view of others, rejecting equality, democracy, peaceful power transition, and partnership with others based on this text. It nullifies the rights of others in all aspects, including the right to

dissent, even through peaceful means such as speech.

Social experts have defined racism as "the claim of a group that distinguishes and considers itself superior to other groups based on their race, color, or beliefs, and therefore asserts its right to control the inferior categories."

Based on this, the theory of divine selection appears to be a form of racism based on lineage. It seems that the "selection" racism is even more extreme than some modern forms of racism. The Houthi racism is not solely based on the distinction of the human race on Earth, as is the case with other forms of racism like Nazism and fascism, for example. Rather, it goes deeper and is more severe as it claims a divine mandate, positioning itself as an intermediary between them and God in the heavens, particularly in matters of religious knowledge.

They have made the concept of jihad, one of the most dangerous tools throughout human history, a means to implement this ideology. The term "jihad" is not simply understood as ordinary combat as commonly known to people. Rather, it carries the meaning of fighting and persisting in it as a sacred religious duty, believed by its proponents as a means of worshiping God through their fighting and the eradication of others. Hence, they refer to their combatants as "mujahideen."

The widely known concept of jihad among the general Muslim population is the defense of oneself against external aggression by non-Muslim countries, where one feels no other choice but to engage in combat. However, these individuals perceive jihad as fighting against their fellow Muslims belonging to different sects. This has resulted in vendettas, societal divisions, and entrenched conflicts that seem to have no end, consuming everything in their path.

In their intellectual document on the issue of jurisprudential fundamentals, they stated the nullification of knowledge in others and claimed that their lineage is the sole gateway through which all knowledge is obtained. This is the same logic that existed within the theocratic Christian Church before the religious reform carried out by Martin Luther.

The text in their intellectual document states: "As for the foundations of jurisprudence, anything that contradicts the Quran or replaces the family of Muhammad is rejected and criticized by everyone. Anything that aligns with the Quran and is used to understand religious texts within the framework of the family of Muhammad is accepted."

This implies the dismissal of modern sciences and the rejection of all knowledge produced by humans outside of their circle. It suggests that their scholars are above criticism, review, and questioning. Their document states: "Any criticism directed at scholars does not include the scholars of the Household of the Prophet and their followers, nor their knowledge."

As a result, they are currently manipulating curricula in Yemen, seizing educational institutions,

and taking control of them. Prior to that, they destroyed schools and institutes that belonged to others. They laid off hundreds of thousands of employees, including tens of thousands of teachers and academics, and replaced them systematically with individuals from their own lineage, even if they lacked qualifications. Their sole qualification is being from the same lineage and ethnic group. They do not accept any criticism or review of their actions, as it is part of their belief system.

Indeed, they not only consider themselves as inheritors of the Quran but also position themselves as companions or partners of the Quran, which is the primary source of belief for Muslims. They have made themselves the embodiment of the Muslim faith, distinguishing themselves from ordinary people and the general Muslim population. This reflects their repugnant intellectual exclusivity. If this is their view towards Muslims, one can only imagine their view towards other nations and communities who do not adhere to their ideology. The future danger lies in the expansion of this group and its potential repercussions.

Due to this perspective, they are establishing a theocratic and clerical form of knowledge that originates solely from their lineage, rather than from the depth of Islamic jurisprudence. This represents a complete rejection of partnership, progress, and modernization established by the Unified Yemeni State through pluralism and educational freedom.

Since the first day of their coup, they have not considered their geographical scope to be limited to Yemen alone. They have extended their conflicts towards neighboring countries in order to become an integral part of the Iranian terrorist project in the region. They aspire to abolish the sanctified places of Muslims in Mecca and Medina and relocate them to Najaf in Iraq and Qom in Iran. This is why they attempted to target Mecca with ballistic missiles a few years ago.

These are the fundamental texts in their document that solidify their classism and promote a

hatred that does not tolerate any disturbance, review, or discussion.

They have divided society into two segments: one segment with the right to dispose of everything, owning everything, and another segment considered as public property belonging exclusively to them, including their lives, wealth, honor, and everything they possess. This is why their discourse is filled with accusations, hatred, and derogatory terms towards the latter segment. They have seized the trade of others and monopolized it for themselves. They have also seized state institutions, including educational institutions, for their own benefit, taking various forms of tributes from citizens without fulfilling their rights, such as salaries and proper healthcare. The world has witnessed how they have prevented vaccinations, whether routine vaccines for children or previous COVID-19 vaccines that the Houthis prohibited.



The Houthi group issued Decree No. 14 on June 11, 2020, which Yemenis considered a dangerous measure that deepens hatred, racism, and discrimination within Yemeni society, dividing it into two segments: the Al-Bayt family and the general population. The amended executive regulations, issued on April 29, 2020, by the head of the Supreme Political Council of the Houthi rebels, "Mahdi al-Mashat," consisted of 125 articles. Amendments were made to Articles 46, 47, and 48 in Chapter 8 of the executive regulations under the title "What is to be done with minerals and metals." This granted the privileged class the right to take 20% of the extracted minerals, including all gold, silver, and other resources found within the earth. This is part of the militia's pursuit of plundering Yemenis.

Yemeni writer Zaid Al-Lahji affirmed that the Houthis aim to solidify the authority of divine right behind this law, and to emphasize to Yemenis that they are ruling them based on the covenant that God has bestowed upon them from the heavens. The evidence for this is that they have been favored over others by receiving one-fifth of the resources.

While the conflict has produced social fragmentation and ignited sectarian divisions in the country over the past years, the Houthi's restructuring of the Zakat law will further exacerbate this fragmentation by institutionalizing social divisions. The recently imposed Khums system by the Houthis will impart a sectarian character to the existing political economy and consolidate economic privileges for the Hashemite and Houthi elites at the expense of the general society. Moreover, concentrating wealth in the hands of a few Yemenis in this manner will worsen the already poor social and economic conditions, leading to increased poverty and unemployment rates.

2- Practical practices

A-Hostile practices towards political opponents



The Houthis have relied on a discourse of hatred to spread their inflammatory ideas against opposition political parties. They utilized religious seminars held in mosques, as well as racist speeches delivered during meetings organized by the Houthis for families and individuals in the areas under their control. They even went so far as to hold meetings in women's councils in villages and cities, broadcasting speeches of hatred and division. This aided the Houthis in targeting their political opponents or even individuals who did not belong to any party. Houthi forces would accuse anyone who opposed them of being affiliated with the "Reform Party" or "ISIS," exploiting the heinous crimes committed by ISIS as a cover and justification for their discriminatory practices against individuals who opposed them.

The violations committed by the Houthis were initially characterized by a consistent pattern when their members took control of Yemeni cities. However, over time and as their control expanded, these violations took an escalating trajectory. This expansion was accompanied by the exclusion of any political party or faction whose policies did not align with the Houthi agenda. It evolved into the persecution and arrest of opponents to the Houthi policy, accompanied by various forms of human rights violations against them.

The violations committed by the Houthis were not limited to the Muslim Brotherhood (Yemeni Congregation for Reform) alone. They expanded to include all symbols of the February Revolution, political opponents, religious groups, and all aspects of life outside

the circle of Houthi support. They relied on a sectarian discourse of hatred that they employed during their control operations in cities, taking advantage of the societal division that was exacerbated by this discourse of hatred among Yemenis. They also manipulated public opinion through various media outlets under Houthi authority, which served as a cover for the Houthis to commit numerous violations against their opponents.

Those who opposed the Houthis were subjected to various violations, starting with persecution and ending with their placement in detention centers that lacked even the most basic human rights guaranteed by international law. They were subjected to torture and humiliation, and the situation escalated to the point where dozens of individuals died as a result of the brutal practices in these detention centers, without any legal charges or fair trials.

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B-Hostile practices towards the Salafists of Dammaj



Before the February 2011 revolution, the Houthis adopted a populist discourse that delved into the social environment by addressing the concerns of ordinary citizens. They established various forms of service-oriented initiatives, ranging from material assistance to hospitals, etc. This solidified their popular base in Saada and its surrounding areas.

With the spread of the Arab Spring to Yemen on February 11, 2011, the Houthis joined the protests, and they were welcomed by the various opposition forces. These forces included independent youth, components of the Joint Meeting Parties, as well as tribal leaders.

On March 24, 2011, the Houthis tightened their control over the Saada Governorate, replacing its governor with another individual of their choosing. Meanwhile, Houthi forces continued to progressively gain control over Yemeni cities. They initially took control of the Al-Jawf and Hajjah governorates, and suddenly, Damaj and Dar al-Hadith, which were Salafist strongholds, found themselves surrounded by Houthi-controlled areas in Saada.

According to reliable reports, the inflammatory rhetoric contributed to grave practices against the Salafists in the Damaj area who held different ideological and doctrinal views from the Houthi group. This resulted in the death of 531 individuals, including 59 children and 48 females, in Saada at the hands of armed Houthi militants, who are now known as "Ansar Allah." The report also indicated that there were 489 cases of civilian injuries and 22 cases of torture out of the total crimes documented by the organization in Saada over the past years.

The report also highlighted the forced displacement of civilians in Saada by the Houthi group from their homes to other districts and governorates. This was considered the most

challenging and widespread violation, with a total of 5,300 cases of displacement out of the total 8,794 documented violations in Saada.

Salafists of Dammaj in Saada Governorate: the model of " forced displacement"

The date of October 20, 2011, marked a turning point in the events taking place in Yemen, as the Houthis highlighted their sectarian dimension for the first time by besieging Damaj, known for its Salafist presence. Houthi forces prevented the entry of students, medicine, and food, and they also

prevented residents from leaving to perform Hajj pilgrimage. Due to the ongoing siege imposed by Houthi militias, the government was forced to accept an agreement that involved the displacement of around 12,000 Salafist students from Saada to Al-Hudaydah in exchange for the deployment of the army in Damaj. However, the Houthis stormed Damaj and emptied it of what remained, solidifying their complete control over Saada, which they considered the capital of their sphere of influence.

In the context of forced displacement, the report revealed that the Houthi group seized 170 houses

owned by civilians. Additionally, the number of completely destroyed houses reached 327, while the report documented the fate of 203 farms that were either destroyed or occupied by the Houthis

over the past eight years. In addition to these violations, the report mentioned that there were 596 cases of abduction, including 15 children, while the fate of 47 individuals remains unknown to this day.

Due to the Houthi group's control over the Saada Governorate, this field report indicated that they possessed 36 prisons and detention centers in most districts of Saada. These facilities were used to detain citizens "who are not convinced of the actions and behavior of the Houthis, and those who disagree with them," as stated in the report. After six bloody wars, the Houthi group forcefully established its authority in the governorate and its surroundings in recent years at the expense of the government and local authorities, whose actual and symbolic presence was absent in the reality of the province. The Houthi group seized, destroyed, and looted 105 government facilities. In violations contradicting freedom of worship and belief, guaranteed by divine laws, international treaties, and human rights charters, even places of worship were not immune from Houthi aggression. The monitoring report revealed that 43 mosques and places of worship were destroyed or taken over, with some converted into military bases and others turned into Houthi-controlled prisons.

G-Restrictions on Religious Freedom and Practice



Local and international human rights reports have documented the growing number of practices that indicate a narrowing space for dissent in Yemen, both in terms of religious and political differences. There has been an increase in hate speech, glorification of violence, and disdain for the opposing party. The Houthi forces, in the provinces under their control, through the Office of Endowments, send unified Friday sermons to prominent mosques in the districts. These sermons are carefully crafted and urge worshippers to send their children to the frontlines. Those preachers

who refuse to pray against Saudi Arabia, as requested, find themselves subjected to harassment and investigation. In fact, many non-aligned preachers have stopped giving sermons in rejection of Houthi dictates and to avoid problems.

Indeed, the Houthis employ the promotion of narratives that glorify the past, despite its negative aspects, and which historically divided Yemenis along sectarian lines. This is a dangerous indicator

that suggests the tearing apart of the social bridges that Yemenis have built over previous decades.

It opens the door to future conflicts based on sectarian, regional, and religious differences, posing a threat to any efforts towards a political solution and any serious consideration of transitional justice.

In addition, the Houthi group has pursued a policy of exclusion against preachers and mosque imams who do not align with their ideology. Many preachers have been forced to leave their mosques through security harassment, arbitrary arrests, and assassinations. SAM organization has documented approximately 204 cases distributed across the provinces under their control.

D. Hate speech and hostile practices against minorities



First, the Jews:

The Jewish community, like other segments of Yemeni society, has suffered various forms of injustice, persecution, and forced displacement. They have been subjected to the seizure of their homes and the looting of their properties by the Houthi group. Not only did the Houthis commit these violations against the rights of the Jewish community, but they also expelled them from Yemen.

Fouad Al-Alawi, a journalist specializing in Jewish affairs in Yemen, believes that the Jewish community has suffered significant marginalization at all levels. This marginalization has been exacerbated by the incitement of the Houthi rebels against them. For over half a century, Yemeni Jews have not received any official attention and have remained isolated from successive governments that have ruled the country. Al-Alawi pointed out that they face marginalization in education, unlike other Yemenis, and have been deprived of their right to government employment.

Furthermore, their suffering has increased recently due to the presence of a group that allows for their killing and does not recognize their right to exist in their own country. As a result, Yemeni Jews have found that leaving the country is their only solution to live, access education, and regain the citizenship rights they have lost in their homeland 11.

There are reports and testimonies indicating violations against the Jewish community in Yemen by the Houthi group. These violations have affected the lives of this community, and these reports suggest that the Houthi group has carried out attacks

and threats against Jews, including the destruction of Jewish properties and the intimidation of remaining Jews in Yemen. Incidents such as the bombing of a Jewish cemetery in the city of Saada in 2014 and an attack on a historic Jewish temple in the capital, Sana'a, in 2015 have been documented. These violations against Jews are considered war crimes that reveal the extent of hatred generated by the ongoing war.

As an example of the persecution and injustice faced by individuals in the Jewish community, the

Houthis arrested a member of the community, Libyan Salem Musa Murhabi (33 years old), on March 10, 2015, while he was selling qat in the tourist market in Suaan, the capital city.

In his testimony to the SAM Organization, Habob Salem, the older brother of the detainee, Libyan,

mentioned that his brother was forcibly hidden for a whole year without them knowing anything about him. They were later informed that his brother, Libyan, was in the National Security and were allowed to visit him for only three minutes. Habib added, "My brother was subjected to severe

torture. He suffered a stroke and one of his eyes was damaged. They did not provide him with medical treatment like other prisoners. He endured great injustice that I don't think any other prisoner has experienced. Despite being with four other individuals in his case, and despite the court ruling his and their innocence and releasing them, Libyan was not released because he belongs to the Jewish faith, according to his account.

Habob Salem adds that the Houthi group forced them and informed them that they had to leave the country in exchange for the release of his brother, Libyan, from detention. If they didn't leave as soon as possible, they threatened to personally arrest him. They had no other choice but to leave Yemen on March 16, 2020, after the Houthi group seized all their money, properties, and personal belongings. This further intensified the suffering of the Jewish community members abroad, with the hope that the Houthi group would release their son and reunite the family, who are currently facing difficult economic and psychological conditions.



There is no Christian community in the legal and social sense of the sect, but there are Christian individuals in Yemen who have been subjected to harassment and threats that affect their lives and put them in constant danger.

Among the top fifty countries with reported persecution, Yemen has risen from the fifth to the third position on the Open Doors World Watch List for 2023. This is due to a slight increase in reported incidents of violence against Christians, such as opposition and restrictions faced by non-registered fellowships. The pressure on converts is extremely high in all areas of life. Christians in Yemen face physical and psychological harm, sexual harassment and rape, as well as forced marriages 13.

One follower of Christianity in Yemen, speaking to the SAM organization, stated that the persecution campaign against them began in 2011, following security disturbances. They were targeted by extremist groups, their homes were attacked, and their belongings were destroyed and looted. They mentioned that one of their siblings, A.A., was killed when he was attacked in his own home, in front of his siblings and children. Feeling the danger, they dispersed and fled to Sana'a, where they stayed until the situation escalated between Ali Abdullah Saleh and the Houthi group. Afterward, security forces turned against them, leading to their persecution and arrest.

The individual continued, saying, "I was arrested on April 12, 2018, along with my nephew and another person, in addition to one of the workers, H.A. I remained in prison for three years, while H.A. remained imprisoned for a year and two months, during which we were

subjected to abuse and torture." They further explained, "I was only released from prison after being blackmailed by them financially, with the involvement of several mediators. The condition was that we had to go to the prosecutor's office. After being presented to the deputy prosecutor, we were released. However, they re-arrested me after I left the prosecutor's office and took me to the Criminal Investigation Department. I was only released again through intermediaries and guarantees. I spent a period under surveillance until I found an opportunity to escape to Aden and from there to Cairo with some of my family."

Open Doors organization (December 2021) indicated that the pressure on Christians in all areas of life, including education, employment, family life, and the ability to practice their religious beliefs, was "extremely high." The organization reported that Christians also faced societal discrimination in the distribution of emergency aid and healthcare. Additionally, those who converted to Christianity faced threats of death and the risk of being expelled from their tribes. Christian women were subjected to sexual harassment, rape, and/or forced marriages to Muslim

men 14.

In March 2021, the Christian Post newspaper reported that the President of Open Doors organization stated that the Houthis had detained Christians and tortured clergy members. According to the newspaper, released prisoners from Houthi detention centers stated that the Houthis targeted individuals suspected of being Christians. It was mentioned that the Houthis denied the allegations made by Mashaal Al-Khaldi after his four-year detention. According to the information received, Houthi intelligence agencies detained Al-Khaldi, who had converted to Christianity, along with other Christians, in solitary confinement and forced them to renounce their religious beliefs 15.



Baha'is

Baha'i is an independent religion separate from other religions. It has its own scriptures, laws, administrative systems, and holy places. Its followers are spread across several countries, including Yemen, with varying proportions. The Bahá'í Faith was founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 1863, who proclaimed himself as a messenger of God and foretold the coming of previous divine religions. He claimed to bring a new divine message that illuminates the world and establishes a new global order based on peace. In this order, the nations and peoples of the world would unite in a system that ensures justice, well-being, and stability for all human beings, according to the beliefs of the religion.

According to a statement by a member of the Bahá'í Faith to "Sam," since the Houthis took control of power, Bahá'ís have been subjected to systematic and collective persecution amounting to genocide. This persecution has included mass arrests of men, women, and children, arbitrary group trials, issuing death sentences based on their belief in the Bahá'í Faith, confiscation of their private and endowment properties and funds, closure of their administrative and developmental institutions, as well as torture in detention facilities. They have also faced societal incitement of hatred and violence against them, forced to live in extremely difficult material conditions, deprived of basic human rights, and subjected to forced displacement, according to the statement.

The situation of Bahá'ís in Houthi-controlled areas continues to be extremely dire. The statement also highlighted that the trial of forcibly exiled Bahá'ís continues despite alleged amnesty decisions. There is ongoing incitement against Bahá'ís through media outlets, university curricula, and cultural programs organized by the Houthis. Additionally, they face

continued restrictions on their livelihoods, including arbitrary and unlawful measures taken against dozens of them, resulting in the deprivation of employment opportunities. These measures include freezing their bank accounts and blacklisting their names, distributed to exchange companies to prevent them from receiving or transferring any financial amounts.

Abdullah Al-Alfi, the official spokesperson for the Bahá'ís in Yemen, stated in an interview with DW on January 21, 2018: "The Houthis are the ones who currently violate the rights of Bahá'ís in the country the most." However, he added that other political Islamic forces within the country are fighting against the Bahá'ís by waging media wars against them.

E. Restrictions on Media Freedoms

With the Houthis' takeover of Sana'a on September 21, 2014, and their tight grip on decision-making, the media and journalism sector witnessed widespread censorship and replacement. It became a compliant tool in the hands of the Houthis, who were previously victims of similar arbitrary practices and harassment. As soon as the Houthis gained control over communications, they began blocking news websites that opposed them. As a result, approximately 80 newspapers, magazines, and radio stations have ceased operation since the start of the war, not to mention the blocking of over 200 local and international news websites from Yemeni viewers.

On March 26, 2015, the Ministry of Information, which was under Houthi control, announced that it would take strict and deterrent legal measures, including the potential closure of any media outlet that incites discord and turmoil. The ministry stated that these measures were necessary due to the sensitivity of the current phase the country was going through, in order to prevent strife. It also accused these media outlets of fueling sectarian and regional tensions and engaging in incitement aimed at tearing apart the social fabric and national unity by spreading false news, distorting facts, and disseminating rumors.

Indeed, the Houthis impose strict control over all media institutions in the capital, Sana'a. They have previously closed down numerous offices and media organizations that do not align with their policies.

Several Yemeni provinces have witnessed a systematic campaign of intimidation and persecution targeting civil activists and journalists by extremist groups. In some cases, this campaign has escalated to the point of murder.

Several human rights reports have documented the abduction of dozens of journalists by Houthi forces during the past three years. The number of kidnapped journalists has exceeded 70, with many of them being released later. One notable incident confirming this behavior occurred in October 2018 when Houthi forces abducted 20 journalists, including

former Yemeni Journalists Syndicate President Abdulbari Taher, during their organization of a seminar on "Combating Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence in Yemeni Media" in Sana'a, organized by the "Mansaa Platform for Media and Development Studies" in cooperation with UNESCO. The human rights reports confirmed that 18 detainees were released after interrogation, while the group continued to detain two journalists. The reason for the journalists' arrest, according to the reports, was "organizing the event without obtaining prior permission from the group." In a precedent, a court affiliated with the Houthi rebels in Sana'a issued a verdict on April 11, 2020, sentencing four journalists (Abdul-Khaleq Omran, Akram al-Walidi, Hareth Hamid, and Tawfiq al-Mansouri) to death on charges of treason and espionage for foreign countries. They had been detained by the group for years along with six others, and they remain in custody to this day. These violations and practices that fuel hatred and deepen divisions are just the tip of the iceberg.

(f) Restriction on public freedoms

The lists of "banned" items in Sana'a, targeting the tightening of people's lives and determining the lifestyle they should adhere to, represent a form of guardianship imposed on society, particularly women. Women are specifically targeted in these lists, which establish standards for the shape, color, and size of clothing they should wear. This is part of the approach followed by the authority in Sana'a, represented by the Houthi group, to tighten control over society, significantly undermining the rights and freedoms of women and girls in areas under their control. The Houthi group has endangered women by preventing them from accessing reproductive health services in some areas under their control. They have heavily restricted women's travel without a male guardian, issued multiple directives imposing a stereotypical vision of "Islamic dress code" for women, as they describe it. Additionally, they have banned women from working, enforced gender segregation in public places, and promoted discriminatory positions against women. They have repeatedly banned mingling at research and graduation ceremonies in universities, expelled women from work, and spread hateful rhetoric against women through various platforms under their influence 16.

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3- Houthi hate channels

A- Houthi media. The Alternative Meaning of Hate

Amidst the ongoing war in Yemen due to the Houthi coup, Iran-backed terrorist militias continue to solidify a discourse of hatred and propagate incitement and sectarianism. This dangerous transformation poses a real threat to social cohesion and the unity of the Yemeni society. Through the exploitation of media outlets and social media platforms, among other means, these militias diligently work to entrench hatred within the community and incite against political parties, religious minorities, and dissidents, thereby expanding the circle of divisions and sectarian tensions in the country 17.

The Houthi group has ignited further media fires following the establishment of dozens of new channels, through which they market and impose their foreign ideas. They have invaded rural areas before cities, propagating a discourse of hatred based on the group's racial discrimination ideology. In contrast, they tarnish the reputation of their opponents from other components, labeling them as "Daesh, mercenaries, terrorists, and hypocrites," while accusing their cities of being "under Israeli and American occupation 18.

The media discourse of the Houthi group, directed internally, reveals the extent of danger they pose to the present and future of Yemen. Through their media campaign, they promote a culture of hatred, sow animosity, revenge, and sectarian racism. This is particularly concerning as it takes place in an environment often characterized by ignorance, especially in areas that serve as social and sectarian incubators for the Houthis. The Houthi

media discourse finds acceptance there because it is wrapped in religion and what they call "Quranic culture," while claiming noble lineage. The danger of this discourse increases due to the fact that the Houthis have monopolized the media landscape in the provinces they control since their coup against the legitimate authority in alliance with the late President Ali Abdullah Saleh in September 2014. There is almost complete absence of opposition media with various perspectives, as the group has suspended the publication of newspapers, targeted journalists, arrested several of them, and blocked anti-Houthi websites ¹⁹.

There are many manifestations of incitement and spreading a culture of hatred in the media discourse of the Houthis, the most prominent of which are the following:

- Accusing their opponents of charges that incite hatred and incitement against them, such as: traitors, mercenaries, Daesh, terrorists, agents of aggression, mercenaries of aggression, mercenaries of Al Salul, mercenaries of the country of the Horn of Satan, etc.
- The claim that those who fight against them on the fronts are infidels and fight to serve America and Israel and that jihad against them is a duty, and this method of incitement they use as one of the means of mobilization among their fighters while sending them to the fronts.
- Exploiting the adjective of pride for mobilization and mobilization on the one hand, and blaming their opponents on the other, by repeating the saying, "Whoever is pleased with his land is pleased to offer it."
- Invoking historical events and attaching them to the present for the purpose of spreading hatred and incitement against their opponents, such as the conflict between the Umayyads and the Abbasids, as well as the killing of Hussein bin Ali, which some Houthi preachers use in Friday sermons to incite against their opponents, by claiming that Hussein's killer is originally from Taiz sometimes, and sometimes that he is originally from Marib.

¹⁶ Khuyut - February 3, 2023, at: <https://www.khuyut.com/blog/houthi-practice>

¹⁶ akhbaralyom ¹⁹ June 2023, https://akhbaralyom.net/news_details.php?sid=162419

¹⁸ The New Arab - February 18, 2021, at: <https://cutt.us/GHo0Z>

¹⁹ Al-Islah Net - November 28, 2018, available at: https://alistlah-ye.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=2298

B- Educational institutions. A swamp overflowing with hatred

For several years, the Houthis have been manipulating educational institutions with the aim of indoctrinating young children. In areas under Houthi control, thousands of teenagers have been subjected to ideological indoctrination or "brainwashing" in order to make them obedient and compliant fighters, willing to sacrifice their lives for the goals of the Houthis. Children have been recruited by the rebels, primarily through coercion, fear, physical abuse, or mistreatment. Despite this, due to effective indoctrination, thousands of them have lost their lives in the hope of becoming heroes or martyrs ²¹.

Contrary to the values upheld by the nations of the world, the Houthi group seeks to turn back the clock to the days of slavery. They claim superiority based on their Hashemite lineage and, on the other hand, they categorize society into groups and classes to facilitate their dealings with everyone.

As mentioned before, the Houthis did not stop at emphasizing their lineage to the Prophet and their honor in Islamic education in their 2014 manifesto. They added the following statement: "The Messenger of Allah is the noblest of Arabs in lineage. His tree is the best tree, and his family is the best family." This addition is intended to convince society of the superiority of the Houthis over other Yemeni people, ultimately leading to the absolute surrender of power to them, as they claim to be the Prophet's descendants and the spokesperson for the divine, possessing divine authority. Indeed, the Houthi group has taken steps to eliminate phrases that indicate equality. One example of this is found in the book "Literature and Texts," for the second grade of high school, part two, page 91, where the paragraph "There is no difference between the old and the young, nor the honorable and the humble" was removed. This deletion is a clear indication that the group wants to emphasize that people are not equal and that there are differences among them.

Another example can be seen in the ninth grade of basic education, part two, page 126, where the paragraph warning the nation against falling into idolatry was removed. The paragraph stated, "Do not take my grave as an idol to be worshipped." The deletion is based on the Houthi's reverence for Shia symbols and their distinction from others through shrines and domes. This implies that there is an inequality between the deceased, just as there is inequality among the living. The deceased from the Imamate lineage and the followers of guardianship are supposed to have different graves. Thus, the issue is not only a theological deviation but also holds political and social significance in preserving shrines and domes that they consider as symbols of guidance and leadership.

²⁰ Source himself

²¹ <https://nesa-center.org/houthis-indoctrination-of-yemens-youth-how-to-untie-the-gordian-knot-of-educational-oppression>, 21 May 2020 Nesa Center/

We mentioned that the Houthis have adopted the following formula when sending prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). The issue is nothing but an endorsement of the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) that the Houthis naturally represent. In the Noble Qur'an, when instructing Muslims to send prayers upon the Prophet, it says, "Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace" (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:56).

Historically, the Houthis have consistently sought to solidify social stratification during their periods of rule in northern Yemen. They have claimed exclusive authority over those outside their group, to the extent that they do not allow marriages outside their own lineage. However, they themselves may choose to marry individuals from other lineages as they please.

Indeed, the Houthis have classified society into lords, judges, tribes, and the common people or servants, all with the aim of subjugating the population and asserting their own dominance over them. By establishing this hierarchical division, they seek to maintain power and prevent any competition from non-lineage individuals for leadership positions. It becomes inconceivable for a commoner or a member of a tribe to assume governance, which is considered the exclusive domain of the ruling lineages. This system of social classification serves to reinforce the Houthi's authority and suppress any challenge to their rule.

As mentioned earlier, the Houthis use religion to serve their various goals. In this context, they gather evidence and proofs that distinguish the Hashemite lineage from others, and they attempt to propagate this directly or indirectly in educational curricula. Therefore, it is not surprising that a sect of society surrenders to the Houthis' claims of superiority, dominance, and selection without

questioning them, as they consider it a religious obligation without any choice in the matter.

As soon as the Houthi militias took control of the capital Sana'a and other provinces, they began making significant changes to the administrative apparatus of education. They excluded many competent teachers solely because they did not belong to the Houthi movement, and replaced them with their own affiliated individuals. This led to a decline in the educational level of the majority of students. Additionally, they changed the educational curricula and introduced sectarian

discourse into the school curriculum. They imposed the chanting of Houthi slogans, which discouraged many parents from sending their children to schools where education was no longer the primary focus. The possibility of their children being recruited and their religious beliefs being altered became a major concern. Here, we provide some examples of the changes introduced by the

Houthi group in the educational curriculum in the areas under their control.

Social Education:

The subject of social studies is considered one of the subjects that contribute to national identity and includes history, geography, and national education. The Houthis have made several changes to the history, national education, and social studies curricula, including deletions and additions.

Some of the most significant changes are:

- In the third grade of primary school, on page 101, the unit on Islamic holidays and national events has been removed and replaced with a topic about the neighborhood and the village.
- In the fifth grade, in the subject of national education, on page 7, the lesson on Yemen before the revolution has been deleted.
- In the fifth grade, in the subject of national education, on page 65, the unit on "Enduring Yemeni Figures," which included figures like Imam Al-Shawkani, Al-Zubairi, and Ali Abdul-Mughni, has been removed and replaced with a unit titled "Prominent Yemeni Figures," which includes Imam Al-Qasim.
- In the sixth grade, in the subject of national education, on page 59, an entire unit has been replaced. The previous unit on enduring figures, which included Omar ibn Abdul Aziz, Omar Mukhtar, and Yusuf Al-Azma, has been replaced with a unit titled "Yemeni Figures and Icons." This new unit includes the following lessons:
 - Lesson 1: Imam Al-Hadi towards truth (Yahya bin Al-Hussein)
 - Lesson 2: The martyr President Saleh Ali Al-Sammad
 - Lesson 3: The martyr and fighter Jareh Allah Omar
 - Lesson 4: The poet (Al-Hasan bin Ali bin Jabir Al-Hubul)
- In the third grade of primary school, in the subject of social studies, in the second part of the curriculum, two units have been replaced. The previous fifth unit, on page 81, included the following lessons: the birth and upbringing of the Prophet, the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophetic mission, the early companions, and the unit's timeline. The previous sixth unit was about the following lessons: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, the anniversaries of September 26th and October 14th, and the unit's timeline. These two units have been replaced with the third unit titled "The Neighborhood and the Village," which includes the following lessons: the residents' location, my neighbors, the residents' occupations in the city or the village, cleanliness in my neighborhood and village, and the unit's timeline.
- In the fifth grade of primary school, in the subject of national education, in the second part of the

curriculum, there have been modifications to the titles and content. The previous text included the following:

Lesson 1, pages 7-24: Yemen Before the Revolution, The Yemeni Revolution, Unity and the Establishment of the Yemeni Republic, National Symbols.

After the modification, the text has been changed to the following:

Lesson 1: Yemen, the Graveyard of Invaders, Yemeni Revolutions, Yemeni Unity, Yemeni Resilience, National Symbols: Yemen.

- Grade 6 primary, Part 2, the previous book included a complete unit titled "Arabs and Attempts for Liberation and Independence" with the following lessons: Palestine, the Algerian Revolution, the Egyptian Revolution, the Syrian Revolution. The previous unit has been replaced with a unit titled "The Yemeni Family and its Components," which includes the following lessons: The family and its formation, family functions, family roles, rights and responsibilities.

- In the fifth grade of primary school, in the subject of national education, in the second part of the curriculum, pages 65-75, the fourth unit has been changed. The previous unit, titled "Enduring Yemeni Figures," included the following figures: Imam Al-Shawkani, Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Zubairi, the martyr Ali Abdulmughni, and the martyr Rajeh Galib Labouza. The unit's title has been changed to "Yemeni Icons," and it now includes the following figures: Imam Al-Qasim bin Muhammad, the revolutionary Galib Rajeh Labouza, President Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Hamdi, and the poet Abdullah Al-Bardoni.



Arabic Language:

The Arabic language ranked third among the subjects targeted for change by the Houthis. It includes Arabic grammar and morphology, literature, texts and rhetoric, and reading. Among the notable changes in the Arabic language curriculum are:

- In the first grade of primary school, in the second part of the curriculum, on page 24, there has been a replacement of the original lesson. The previous

lesson titled "Omar Goes to School" has been changed to "Mahmoud Goes to School." Additionally, there has been a further modification to the lesson in the latest edition on page 35, where it now reads "Mohammed at School," edition 2021.

- In the second part of the literature and texts curriculum for the first grade of secondary school, on page 91, a paragraph has been removed.

The paragraph that has been deleted is: "And there is no difference between the old and the young, nor the mighty and the humble."

- In the second part of the literature and texts curriculum for the first grade of secondary school, on page 77, paragraph number (11) has been deleted.

The paragraph originally included the following sentence: (And if you judge among people, you will judge justly) [An-Nisa: 58] - The paragraph is as it was: Express the related pronoun in the following words: "And if you judge among people, you will judge justly."

- First Grade Primary school, Part II, p. 123 Distortion of the hymn of the alphabet in accordance with the orientations of the group, as an example:

When the letter B, B duck laid an egg to: B Badr broadcast the light, and the letter Jim: Jim Jama Ya Ahbab, to: an army that protects the revolution.

Sin is an hour that saves my time to Sin is a sword for heroes, and the letter L:

Lam meat builds my body before eating from it I say the name of Allah, to: Lam is a flame in my homeland that burns the lackeys of tyranny.

The changes in the educational curricula implemented by the Houthis aim to "construct a national identity that aligns with their vision of the Yemeni state... The national identity cultivated in school assemblies and the education system as a whole involves raising a new

generation of soldiers to fight in a sectarian war based on the Houthis' perception of religious superiority. However, by framing the identity in religious terms, it also designates anyone who opposes the Houthis as religious opponents rather than political opponents. This exclusionary national identity leads to the marginalization of non-Houthi Yemenis, further

exacerbating the current fragmentation for decades to come."

Activist Musa Al-Namrani tells Al-Mashariq that in addition to inundating the students with propaganda through local media outlets, the militia influences students through lectures delivered by teachers affiliated with the militias, some of whom were specifically recruited for this purpose. He added, "We have seen numerous images of child fighters, some of whom

appeared on media channels affiliated with the militias after undergoing brainwashing. Meanwhile, the militia forcibly recruited and either killed or captured others. 23"

C. Summer Centers and Training Camps

Every year, schools in the areas under Houthi control in northern Yemen transform into hotbeds for exporting violence, projects of death, sectarian animosities, fueling hate speech, and undermining social coexistence and peace.

With the onset of summer, the Houthis embark on unprecedented arrangements and preparations to open the doors of schools and transform them into what is now known as "summer centers." These centers are described by activists and human rights advocates as factories for exporting

extremist ideology. They aim to turn thousands of Yemeni children into time bombs that will explode in the near future, leaving behind a tragedy of the war that Yemenis have been enduring for the past eight years.

The Houthis seek, through their summer centers in areas under their control, to poison the minds of children who are the primary targets in all schools. They view this opportunity as a chance to turn these children into projects of death within a society that is unable to halt this process in any form.

These centers feed children with a discourse of violence, hatred, and rejection of coexistence, which is the most dangerous outcome. Human rights activist Riad Al-Dubai warns of this danger in his interview with "Yemen Freedom": "There is a serious matter in these centers where children

are indoctrinated with sectarian, racist, and regionalist discourses. These discourses lack coexistence and tolerance towards others. The minds of these children are being poisoned, and they learn terms that incite hatred and violence. They are also taught Houthi slogans and forced to listen to speeches by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi. Consequently, these centers engage in brainwashing children, which is the alarming issue at hand.

The Houthi summer centers are indeed military training centers, and this is no longer a hidden fact as numerous videos circulating on social media attest to it. During these

rigorous training sessions, students are taught extremist and hostile slogans, pledging allegiance to the Houthi leadership. These centers combine combat training with the cultivation of an extremist and hostile ideology.

The youth injected with those terrorist ideologies in these centers become time

bombs, carrying future mines that do not end with the demise of the Houthi militia. Despite the popular rejection of the Houthis as a group, the hatred and seeds of terrorism remain ingrained in their minds. Added to that are the combat training and skills they acquire, making them susceptible to being recruited by any terrorist organization in the future. This poses another danger, as the Houthi centers represent a terrorist environment par excellence 25.

Journalist Ya'qub Al-Saami added in his conversation with "News Yemen":

"On a social level, as observers, we do not lack clear examples of how children who receive Houthi propaganda transform into very obedient instruments of violence in the hands of the Houthis." He pointed out that: "When a child's mind opens up to a set of hostile beliefs that imagine the world as a group of evil forces plotting against them, imagine society as lost, weak, and incompetent, in need of forced correction, and imagine the family as a constraint and barrier against jihad, national liberation, and religion, their commitment to the world, society, and family fades away and diminishes. Consequently, the child consciously or unconsciously seeks to undermine these human structures instead of coexisting with them, and their commitment is limited only to their group that instilled these beliefs in their minds 26.

Observers consider that the deliberate brainwashing of children by the Houthi militia, and the dominance of the ideology of death and martyrdom over life, deepens a culture of hatred and rejection of the other based on sectarianism and superstitious beliefs. This danger goes beyond the effects of the bombings

of homes and mosques carried out by the militia. These children are seen as seeds of human bombs loaded with sectarian, regional, and religious hatred that threaten the present and the future 27.

C- Mosques. Platforms for incitement against the other



Mosques hold sanctity among Muslims in general and are particularly respected by Sunni Muslims.

The mosque is considered the House of Allah where Muslims gather for prayer and Friday congregational prayer. It is not permissible to attack, halt, or use the mosque for worldly purposes related to trade and politics. However, the Houthis have disregarded the sanctity and sacredness of mosques. They have attacked and targeted them with their shells, and many of them have been turned into resting places for chewing qat. Moreover, they have used mosques as channels to spread the poison of hatred and incitement against political opponents and the entire society.

The use of religious rhetoric by the Houthi group is not a new phenomenon. On several occasions, the Houthis have exploited this rhetoric in their military operations and attacks on various civilian neighborhoods in the city of Marib. Additionally, they have seized religious pulpits, such as mosques, and replaced them with preachers affiliated with the group who rally for fighting and incite against their adversaries.

The exploitation of mosques as platforms for incitement is not limited to targeting political opponents but also extends to the silent or neutral segment of society. According to reports from Al-Mashhad Net on November 30, 2021, media outlets and mosque pulpits are used to attack the silent or neutral segment. Houthi leaders and supervisors are distributed in mosques, squares, and gatherings in areas under their control to intimidate and frighten those who remain silent or neutral. This rhetoric has even led many residents of Sana'a to abstain from attending Friday prayers. These inciting speeches against the silent or neutral individuals within the community have not been well received by worshippers. In one

incident at the Hail Mosque in Sana'a in mid-October 2020, during a Friday sermon delivered by a Houthi leader, the silent or neutral individuals were described as hypocrites and cowards, which sparked anger among the worshippers who demanded the removal of the speaker from the pulpit. This resulted in verbal clashes and chaos within the mosque, which was eventually suppressed by security forces affiliated with the Houthis, silencing any dissenting voices against the Houthi leader's speech 28.

E- Social events. Disguised hatred

The Houthi militias spread their ideas of hatred, characterized by racism and sectarianism, within

society by exploiting various social occasions, including weddings, funerals, and even women's gatherings in the areas under their control.

Local reports have revealed that Houthi militias broadcast their religious lectures and teachings during women's wedding ceremonies in various regions, as part of their relentless efforts to instill racism and hatred within Yemeni society. According to different reports, these Houthi lectures are transmitted through loudspeakers in women's wedding halls in Sana'a, forming an unprecedented phenomenon in Yemen's history. This has caused great astonishment among the population, as reported by Al-Asema newspaper on August 29, 2018. 29

Second: Southern Transitional Council



The Southern Transitional Council (STC) is a political entity in southern Yemen. Its presidential body was announced on May 11, 2017. The presidential body of the STC comprises a majority of governors from southern and eastern provinces of Yemen. The aim of establishing this council, as expressed by its leaders, was to create a southern political entity that would be on par with the political forces in northern Yemen. This emerging entity aims to represent the aspirations of the southern population in any political developments for a political solution in Yemen.

However, the reality of human rights and politics shows the opposite, especially when we consider

the unequivocal support of the UAE for this council, which has started advocating for the division of Yemen and the secession of the south from the north, aiming to establish an independent state separate from the rest of Yemeni territories. They exploit the political weakness in Yemen, and the previous regime's approach based on geography created a basis for political disagreement between northern and southern Yemen. However, it is concerning that this disagreement has escalated to the point of proposing the idea of dividing Yemen into two separate states. The UAE has been promoting this proposal by supporting Yemeni individuals and leaders who adopt such viewpoints, taking advantage of the significant financial and military support offered to those separatists.

A- Speech charged with racism and incitement

Supporters of the separatist movement in the south employ a discourse filled with exclusionary language and driven by motives of revenge and resentment towards "the other." In this context, "the other" is often manifested in anything related to the north or having a connection to the north.

Northern citizens are portrayed as the cause of the calamities that have befallen the south, with the narrative suggesting that all the problems in the south are due to those who come from the north. This deepens the rift between the two parts of the country using a catastrophic populist rhetoric that leaves destructive effects on the social fabric. It leads to the legitimization of all forms of looting, aggression against people's properties, and making them vulnerable to violence, simply because they are northerners. The situation has reached a point where the violations committed against northerners are considered as part of a struggle to reclaim land, as portrayed by the inflammatory discourse embraced by separatist supporters on a daily basis.

The separatist Transitional Council in southern Yemen has indeed exacerbated the situation by adopting a hostile discourse against the inhabitants of northern provinces. At times, they describe them as "invaders" or refer to them using derogatory terms like "Al-Dhahabisha," which is a reference to a comedic character played by a clown in a TV series from three decades ago³⁰. Since 2007, the northern separatist movement has been viewed as adversaries and a security threat. They are seen as influential groups that exploit the wealth and opportunities of the south, depriving the southern population of public employment and resources. The demand for secession from the north is considered a political objective. However, the current situation is the opposite. It fails to separate itself from the inflammatory narratives and retaliatory actions that have been propagated and promoted by certain media outlets. These media outlets rely on portraying the south as victims, without distinguishing between the corruption of those in power and the ordinary citizens. This was mentioned in an article on the Mashaed website on February 14, 2022.

The discourse of division and discrimination has spread within government circles and institutions.

An example of this was presented by the visual artist "Ali Al-Dhahrani," who stated that he was denied entry to the offices of the Aden governorate to request permission for an exhibition of his work. The security officer at the entrance justified this by saying, "You are a Dhahabshi, and you are not allowed to enter here." "Dhahabshi" is a derogatory term used to mock someone from a northern province. This incident was reported by the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies on March 27, 2022.

B. Practices against Journalists and Activists

Journalists and activists in Yemen face security risks and arrests due to their opinions. The Committee to Protect Journalists has found that those covering their news in Aden and other areas in the south - which were once considered relatively safe - also face attacks and

Journalists and activists in Yemen face security risks and arrests due to their opinions. The Committee to Protect Journalists has found that those covering their news in Aden and other areas in the south - which were once considered relatively safe - also face attacks and harassment from militias supported by the Emirati coalition, such as the Security Belt and Hadhrami Elite Forces.

These groups exert pressure on the media to refrain from criticizing the UAE or other countries supporting the Yemeni government, or reporting on issues involving the militias' involvement. A journalist, preferring not to disclose his identity, told Al Jazeera Net that the journalistic work environment in areas controlled by the Transitional Council has become toxic. They are prohibited from discussing political or human rights issues, and their work is restricted to a narrow framework.

The journalist adds, "The situation has become highly complicated. Working professionally, freely, and without constraints is increasingly difficult. The bans, restrictions, incitement, and considering journalists as enemies are all precursors to eliminating journalists. The arrest of journalist Ahmed Mahir is a message to all journalists." (Al Jazeera Net - October 20, 2022).

c. Forced Deportations and Mass Arrests

There has been an increase in campaigns of arrests, incitement, and deportation targeting residents from northern provinces in the city of Aden and other southern provinces by forces affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council, an armed group loyal to the UAE and supported by them. This is fueled by speeches of hatred and racism promoted by the council against northern Yemenis. Members of the Transitional Council systematically and almost daily carry out organized campaigns in the areas under their control, targeting northerners who are then subjected to inhumane deportation methods, such as being loaded onto livestock trucks and sent to northern regions. These campaigns often involve physical assault, verbal abuse, and humiliation by members of these forces and some southerners influenced by the racist rhetoric employed by the Southern Transitional Council in its conflict with the Houthi forces who control northern areas in Yemen.

There is a discriminatory exclusionary discourse practiced by the Transitional Council against the people from the northern provinces and other opposing southern components in particular. A different aspect of Aden has emerged: expulsion and exclusion, where the regional discourse has led to division and fragmentation. Measures against citizens have

increased, as well as a sense of insecurity, despite the presence of various security forces in the city. The language of incitement and hatred has intensified in the transitional media, which has contributed to fueling violations and unprecedented crimes against citizens belonging to the northern provinces of the country 31.

"Each wave of deportation has been accompanied by explicit discriminatory discourse from the leadership of the Southern Transitional Council. In 2016 and 2019, Hani bin Breik, the commander of the Security Belt and the deputy head of the council, made clear statements indicating that citizens from the north are not welcome in Aden and urged them not to come to the city." - Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, March 27, 2022.

The danger lies in the hate speech propagated by local media, supported by the United Arab Emirates, which portrays northern Yemenis as followers of the Houthi group. Consequently, this legitimizes the actions taken by the Southern Transitional Council against the northerners.

D. Closure of restaurants and shops

Local human rights reports have documented the continuous closure of numerous restaurants and shops in areas under the control of the Southern Transitional Council. Unknown individuals have distributed leaflets calling for the closure of these establishments, despite the fact that the majority of workers in these restaurants come from northern provinces, without providing any reasons. Additionally, members of the Southern Transitional Council often arrest many workers and shop owners solely based on their affiliation with northern regions in Yemen, without committing any unlawful acts. The authorities in the south justify these actions by claiming to pursue shop owners who lack proper licenses or have not completed the required legal documentation.

In this context, a worker at a ready-to-wear clothing store in Aden informs Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed that "the most discriminatory practices we face occur at the checkpoints on the entrances to the city of Aden. Some individuals deliberately direct insulting and discriminatory remarks, while this behavior tends to decrease within the city itself." (Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed - May 16, 2022). Cutting off the source of livelihood was one of the reasons behind the incitement in various Yemeni regions. Similar to the fate of dozens of small traders, Mohammed Al-Dabai, a clothing merchant, was forced to leave the city of Aden after nearly two decades of working there and return to his hometown in Taiz. This came as a result of the growing regional discourse against all individuals from northern provinces, which made them and their belongings targets for looting and extortion by criminal gangs, or subject to hurtful insults in the best-case scenario 32.

Demonizing displaced persons



The satellite channel "Aden Al-Mustaqilla," affiliated with the Transitional Council, spearheaded a campaign of incitement through reports and discussion panels that included misleading information and a discourse inciting harm to displaced persons, characterized by discrimination, aggression, and violence. The channel broadcasted reports claiming the spread of a contagious skin disease among students in the Abyan province in a "very alarming" manner and alleged that the cause was the mingling of displaced persons with the local population, referring to those displaced from provinces under Houthi militias' control. Additionally, the channel disseminated promotional content inciting society against the displaced persons, whom they referred to as "settlers" in the Ateera camp in Lahij province. In November of last year, the "Watan News" website

documented an online campaign launched by the official channel of the Council and supported by its media outlets and activists, aiming to incite against displaced persons under the hashtag (#DisplacementToTheSouth_IsSystematicDestruction). In July 2022, the "Al-Amanah" newspaper, affiliated with the Transitional Council, published a report titled "Displaced Persons: A Time Bomb and a Threat to Aden," with subheadings raising questions such as "How does a northern displaced person turn into a spy and informant?" 33

In a report published by the 4th of May newspaper titled "Displacement: Systematic Invasion and Destruction of the South, Land and People," the report focused on the following points:

"Consolidating the occupation, systematic settlement, the most dangerous organized political action, tearing apart the southern fabric, the imminent danger to the south, displacement managed by hidden organizations and forces, increased suffering and

deterioration, legitimizing corruption, circumventing the referendum, corruption and looting of the rights of southerners, destruction of the system and the law, displacement as a cover for special missions, exploitation of displacement and security breaches." The report quoted a member of the National Assembly in the Transitional Council as saying that "the main objective is to gain actual control over Aden, create chaos, put pressure on services, and control civil and humanitarian organizations." 34

On July 9, 2023, a political activist posted a tweet that stated: "It is well-known that displaced persons should be placed in camps and shelters outside cities, and this is practiced worldwide except in the south. The authorities responsible for managing the affairs of displaced persons send them to densely populated city centers, intentionally or unintentionally, to exacerbate the suffering of these cities and exert significant pressure on them in difficult and complex circumstances. The government has abandoned its responsibilities and obligations towards the people, services, and more. 35

Third: Hate speech in the areas controlled by the legitimacy

خطاب الكراهية

Many media institutions affiliated with the internationally recognized government have slipped into the same quagmire and have resorted to promoting a unified narrative that describes the Houthi group using various terms such as "Iranian, terrorist, Rafidite, and Persian," indicating their alliance with Iran 36.

32 The New Arab - February 18, 2021, at: <https://cutt.us/GH>

33 Watan News, 9 March 2023 <http://yemeninews.net/show2551146.html>

34 4 May e-Newspaper, 20 November 2022, <https://www.4may.net/news/84170>

35 Twitter, Tweet at the link: <https://twitter.com/Fareed0vfj/status/1678023184426098689>

Additionally, some inflammatory religious discourse emanating from certain pulpits in Taiz has played a role in some recent violent incidents. Some preachers in mosques criticize and attack artistic and cultural events held in Taiz, claiming they promote moral corruption. 37

During June 2023, religious figures, academics, politicians, and extremist activists led a widespread

incitement campaign against Taiz University in response to the government-affiliated university council's decision to include "women's development within the framework of gender equality" in the postgraduate program for a Master's degree. The campaign against Taiz University was spearheaded by a parliamentarian from the Al-Islah Party and the extremist cleric Abdullah Al-Adini, who called for the closure of the Women's Development Research and Studies Center due to its adoption of gender equality issues, which he claimed encouraged "the legalization of homosexuality, fornication, sexual deviation, moral decay, and family rebellion." He further described the university council's vote in favor of gender equality as a "grave crime, perhaps the most heinous crime in Yemen's history." He added, "We will not remain silent about this great evil, and we will work by all means to stop it. We will not allow it to pass, no matter the cost. 38

The Imam of the Noor Mosque in Taiz added, "No one expected that Taiz University, in a Muslim country and in a besieged city, would commit this crime, engage in such obscenity, declare war against Allah, His Messenger, His Sharia, the Yemeni people, and future generations! No one expected this to happen, not even in their wildest dreams." He continued, "This crime, this abomination, should shake the entire land of Yemen and shake the entire Islamic nation. 39

On June 14, 2023, a sheikh commented on the issue in a post on his Facebook page, stating, "In truth, I cannot imagine that Taiz University would approve of this. It would be a betrayal of religion, values, customs, and human nature. We exclude the possibility of such a decision coming from our educated and trusted educational elites responsible for the sons and daughters of the people. If Taiz University approves of this, may Allah forbid, it would become untrustworthy in safeguarding the Muslim children within it. Moreover, anyone who approves of it would be deemed untrustworthy according to Islamic law, not only concerning their own children and families but also the children and daughters of the people studying at the university. The people, whether righteous or sinful, those who pray and those who abandon prayer, will not remain silent on this matter. This is beyond tolerability. 40

During the recent period, a mosque preacher in the Al-Tahrir Al-Asfal area of Al-Mudhaffar

36 The New Arab - February 18, 2021, at: <https://cutt.us/GH>

37 Khuyut Platform - 19 June 2022. <https://www.khuyut.com/blog/aljumah-sermons>

38 Yemen Future, 22 June 2023. <https://yemenfuture.net/news/15174>

39 Excavations, 20 June 2023. <https://2u.pw/DcFgB3x>

40 Facebook, posted at the link: https://www.facebook.com/atqady2012/posts/pfbid0w3d76AwGX5eq8kmMd6FPFvt8oDyPzaGg3xLpzzapVMQRs8XxSZwe5ZYQdycy4hgl?__tn__=-R

district in Taiz appeared, delivering a series of Friday sermons that incited a youth campaign initiated by activists, including women, under the slogan "My Passport Without Guardianship." The campaign supports women in obtaining passports without the obstacles of requiring the presence of a male guardian. The Friday preacher went on to criticize and incite against those involved in the campaign, considering their actions as contributing to women's rebellion against their families. In a previous Friday sermon at a mosque in the Al-Salakhana neighborhood of Taiz, which is under internationally recognized government control, the same preacher called for the cessation of artistic events organized by the local authorities and engaged in a speech that fueled hatred in the community. 41

Furthermore, in the Friday sermon on February 4, 2022, the Imam of the Noor Mosque in Taiz also criticized the "My Passport Without Guardianship" campaign, saying: "...women go out protesting for women to be without guardianship... Brothers, do not imagine that this issue is solely about women attending alone, there is more to it. It is a matter that we have been talking about for decades. It is a declaration of rebellion against religion and against the family." He added,

"I did not say this myself, but the activists themselves stated that they want to rebel against the family and against religion." This was considered a clear incitement and exploitation of the mosque platform for purposes other than what it is supposed to serve. 42

Moreover, religious groups in the rural areas of Taiz, Lahj, and Yemen in general have intensified their incitement activities against humanitarian organizations and the women working with them over the past two years. These groups claim that the work of these organizations contradicts the values and local virtues. According to an investigation conducted by Al-Mushahid website on July 31, 2022, 28 cases of harm were documented among girls who suffered various forms of harm due to anti-organization and anti-women campaigns. These cases were monitored through field tracking in several rural areas of Taiz and Lahj governorates.

The damages inflicted on the 28 girls varied, including job loss, increased restrictions on their freedom, defamation or damage to their reputation, physical and psychological violence from their families and communities, loss of social or familial relationships, facing new challenges in work environments, and other forms of material and psychological harm.

In Marib, for example, in July 2023, a military police force arrested the writer and activist "Mane'a Suleiman," 36 years old, from the Al-Yamama Hotel where he was residing with his family.

The arrest was made on the pretext of his alleged insult to the Companions of the Prophet and religious beliefs. On the following day, another military police force surrounded the hotel, and a female police unit stormed the room where Suleiman was staying, searching for

documents and a laptop belonging to him. They also confiscated the mobile phone of one of the women accompanying him.

Relatives of the activist "Suleiman" confirmed, during their communication with "Sam," that the actions taken by the military police were based on political directives due to Suleiman's activities on social media platforms. They also mentioned that they have been prohibited from visiting him since his arrest. 43

In January 2021, the government-affiliated Political Security forces in Marib arbitrarily arrested a woman because her brother was associated with the Houthi group. The woman later died in detention, according to the Women's Solidarity Network. In July and August, two women human rights defenders, one of whom had a disability, were subjected to harassment and assault by government armed forces in Taiz. They were accused of engaging in "prostitution" and working for the Houthis, according to a report by Amnesty International for the year 2021.

In addition, figures affiliated with the Salafi movement and the Reform Party participated in an anti-Baha'i campaign. The Salafi scholar "Khaled Al-Wasabi" and "Abdullah Abdulmajeed Al-Zindani," the son of another prominent scholar, published in 2016 about the Baha'is, describing

them as apostates supported by the United States to destroy Muslim societies. Additionally, in 2018, the well-known reformist writer Rashida Al-Qaili stated on Facebook that the arrest of Baha'is was one of the few good things done by the Houthi authorities. In 2013, incitement against

Baha'is became part of the curriculum at the University of Science and Technology, a private educational institution established and managed by the Reform Party. A section on the Baha'i faith

was added to the Islamic Culture book, which is read by all students at the university, and this section described the Baha'i religion as part of the Zionist movement. 44

Indeed, there is a significant hate speech directed against the Houthis by their opponents. This discourse promotes hatred and hostility towards the Houthis, portraying them as terrorists and enemies of the country. They are described using derogatory terms such as "Iran's lackeys," "Magi," "Rafidites," "Shiite street dwellers," and others. Additionally, some individuals call for fighting against the Houthis, considering it a support for Islam and a defense of religion and the companions of the Prophet. They depict anyone affiliated with the Houthi group as misguided, deviant, and make other derogatory accusations that demonize the Houthis.

Furthermore, activists and media personnel often engage in campaigns of incitement against Southerners. For example, one journalist posted a tweet on September 5, 2022, stating:

"Aden has turned into a village in the era of village chiefs, with no security, safety,

41 Khuyut, 19 June 2022, <https://www.khuyut.com/blog/aljumah-sermons>

42 Facebook, the video is available at the link, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=638686727409575>

43 SAM, 11 July 2023, <https://samrl.org/L.html?!=a/10/A/c/1/69/71/4859>

or stability. Armed gangs from a single region loot lands and people's money, spread fear, and kidnap anyone who opposes them. Aden, which was once a beacon for the Middle East, has become an unsafe village. 45

Another journalist posted a tweet on July 7, 2023, which stated: "The monkeys of the mercenary triangle want to turn Hadramaut into murder, chaos, fraud, deception, division, and criminality, just as they did in Aden. They are unaware that the giants and jinn are asleep in Hadramaut, and if they awaken, they will blow them and their financiers away like dust. Using regionalist and racist language, the systematic incitement campaigns launched by the separatist Transitional Council against the displaced people in the southern Yemeni provinces continue, violating human rights and citizenship. 46



Fourth: The Role of External Parties in Deepening Hate Speech

A. The UAE's Role in Deepening Hate Speech



The United Arab Emirates (UAE), since its participation in the Arab coalition in March 2015, has been seeking to deepen the geographical division in Yemen to serve its own interests in the country. Local human rights reports have shown that the UAE has supported and empowered the Southern Transitional Council at the expense of the legitimate government. In addition to the massive financial and military assistance provided by the UAE government to the southern factions, these authorities also finance media and propaganda campaigns through various media outlets to create and deepen hatred among Yemenis. They particularly focus on highlighting geographical differences between the north and south, advocating for the division of Yemen and the right of the south to form its own separate state. They exploit the unique and difficult circumstances of the Yemeni state and government to impose a divisive reality based on geography, by promoting hate speech among the southern factions, with the aim of deepening the division among Yemenis and attempting to create two separate Yemeni states to achieve their own ambitions in southern Yemen.

B. Saudi rhetoric against the Houthis

Saudi Arabia has been deepening the discourse of hatred between Sunnis and Shias for years through various media outlets, as well as through meetings and religious seminars organized by prominent religious figures who adopt the government's anti-Shia rhetoric. These discourses intensified after Saudi Arabia's involvement in the ongoing conflict in Yemen, particularly when it led the Arab coalition in 2015.

Since then, the kingdom, through its government-affiliated religious figures, who are all Sunnis, has launched attacks against the Houthis, labeling them as "Rafidites" and "Rawafid" and belittling their beliefs and practices. In a public session, a member of the Saudi Arabian Council of Senior Scholars, the highest religious body in the country, responded to a question about Shia Muslims by saying, "They are not our brothers... they are the brothers of Satan."

Reports from local media and human rights organizations have shown that some scholars, such as Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais and others who are affiliated with the state, deliberately use conspiratorial language when discussing the issue of Shia Muslims, particularly the Houthis. They label them as the "fifth column" aligned with Iran and portray them as inherently treacherous. The state also allows other religious scholars to employ media outlets and their millions of social media followers to stigmatize Shia Muslims without facing any consequences.

The religious discourse that deepens division and incites violence has led to an escalation of voices within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calling for the necessity of combating the Shia, particularly the Houthi group, in Yemen and eliminating them, as they are seen as a threat to the Kingdom and its security. The danger of this discourse lies in the absence of any opposing voices to the massacres committed by Saudi forces within Yemeni territory, including the bombing of civilian homes, the displacement of tens of thousands of people from their homes, and the arbitrary detention of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, who are subjected to inhumane conditions in detention camps.

In December, Open Doors issued a report stating that in areas controlled by groups affiliated with the Saudi-led coalition, extremist Sunni groups often target Christians. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur, there have been cases where prominent Christian figures have been subjected to intimidation or threats by authorities on charges of apostasy, which carries the penalty of death.

According to reports, the government authorities allowed prisoners and detainees to participate in Islamic religious celebrations but prohibited religious minorities from practicing their faiths.

Freedom of speech: All parties to the conflict severely restricted the right to freedom of expression.

Human rights defenders, journalists, and activists faced specific gender-based suppression.

Local human rights defenders encountered harassment, threats, and smear campaigns from the Saudi-led coalition, the government, and Houthi forces. Freedom House reported that personal expression and private discussions remained highly limited due to intimidation by armed groups and unrestricted surveillance by the Houthi authorities. In multiple instances, Houthis targeted

the homes of activists, journalists, and political leaders who opposed them, using threats of arrest and other means to intimidate perceived dissenters and silence opposition.

In a report released in March, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented 16 cases of arbitrary detention of civilians by Saudi and Yemeni forces allied with them in Al-Mahra between June 2019

and February. Saudi security forces transferred 11 out of the 16 detainees to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and eventually released the remaining five. According to reports, five detainees were transferred to a prison in Abha, the capital of Asir Province in Saudi Arabia. The families of these detainees were unaware of their whereabouts for five months until the detainees were registered at the Abha prison. The other six detainees, all men from the northern part of the country, were arrested while crossing the border from Oman into Yemen after receiving medical treatment in Oman.

44 Sana'a Center for Studies - July 2021, available at: <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications-ar/14569>

45 Twitter, Tweet at the link: <https://twitter.com/alrahbi5/status/1566737945071067136>

46 Twitter, Tweet at the link: <https://twitter.com/SSSSRR101/status/1677095480952586240>

Chapter Five: Hate Speech.. Implications and treatments

It is true that media outlets affiliated with the conflicting parties in Yemen often engage in a competition to vilify and stigmatize each other, resorting to the use of derogatory language. They deliberately distort facts and manipulate information to propagate accusations and incite public opinion against one another. These media outlets create and promote fictional characters to the public, only to later destroy and bury them in oblivion. Additionally, they contribute to the gradual fragmentation of society through negative reinforcement of social labeling, encouraging the segregation of its members based on the stereotypical images portrayed by the media in the minds of the masses. 47

Lawyer and political activist Yasser Al-Maliki, in an interview with "Yemen Monitor" on December 1, 2020, believes that "hate speech has played a significant role in bringing Yemen's situation to this level of tension and societal fragmentation. If hate speech is not the cause of conflicts, it is the biggest contributing factor to their escalation and intensification." Al-Maliki further states, "That speech almost blinds the parties involved in any conflict from listening to peace or engaging in dialogue, fueling tension, resistance, and increased incitement, whether in the media or on social platforms. It has contributed to the tensions we witness, for example, in Taiz or the southern provinces, or between political and social components." Taha Saleh adds, "The transformations of the war have made hatred a living reality that Yemenis cannot escape from. As we observe the war that took place against Taiz, its inhabitants developed a complex towards people from northern provinces because they came to attack the city from the outside. Despite the fact that Taiz used to be one of the most diverse cities, many segments of society now carry this complex towards people from the northern provinces." Saleh also points to "the culture of secession promoted by the Southern Transitional Council, backed by the United Arab Emirates, in Aden and the southern provinces, as well as the displacement operations that affected the people of Taiz. The city of Hodeidah was a result of incitement and hatred campaigns on social media and in reality, as residents of Taiz now feel threatened when passing through the southern provinces. 48

The impact of hate speech is not limited to political aspects only; it also extends to various cultural and social aspects. Its negative influence has reached a point where citizens are affected by it due to the incitement of the media and hate speech.

As a result of the language of hatred in the media discourse adopted by conflicting parties through their affiliated media outlets, the values of coexistence and peace in the majority of Yemeni regions, which were once known for such values, have been undermined.

Consequently, several individuals in Yemeni society have become victims, and many families have been humiliated and forced to flee due to intimidation campaigns launched against them. They have either fallen victim to the campaigns carried out mostly by parties or individuals influenced by hate speech propagated through the media. 49

Tawfiq Al-Hamidi, the head of the SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties based in Geneva, states to Yemen Monitor: Hate speech has contributed to fueling the conflict in Yemen.

The parties involved have utilized all their intellectual, religious, and historical tools and employed various means to justify their actions, nullify the other, and fill people's minds with ideas of revenge, hatred, and racial discrimination, which have had an impact on many harsh practices.

Al-Hamidi further added to Yemen Monitor that the discourse has focused on sectarianism, regionalism, and sometimes ethnicity, contributing to incitement for killing, disdain, psychological

and intellectual harm. Unfortunately, specialized media outlets have emerged for this purpose, spreading across all social media platforms, using both real and fake identities.

He added, "This discourse has undermined the values of coexistence and peace in the majority of regions in Yemen, which were known for their prevalence. As a result, a number of individuals in Yemeni society have become victims, and many families who sought refuge have been subjected to campaigns of terror launched against them. These campaigns are mostly carried out by factions or individuals from the general public who are biased or influenced by the hate speech propagated by the media. 50

In Sana'a, the Houthi media outlets have consistently labeled supporters of the legitimate government, including politicians, military personnel, and parliamentarians, as "traitors." Under this banner, hundreds of families have been subjected to campaigns of terror that forced them to flee. Their properties have been confiscated, following a scenario that was later replicated in southern provinces against northern residents and in certain areas under the control of the legitimate government against leaders affiliated with the Houthis. 51

The media discourse of the Houthis, including the dissemination of a culture of hatred and incitement, has several catastrophic results, the most important of which are: mining the future of Yemeni society, establishing revenge, hatred and semi-sustainable wars, promoting a culture of hatred, division and political conflicts, and constantly lurking in the future with today's opponents, and evoking such discourse whenever new developments occur and investing its effects when requested.

47 Almadaniya, 16 November 2021. <https://almadaniyamag.com/ar/2021/11/16/war-journalism-yemen>

48 Yemen Monitor - December 2020, at the link: <https://www.yemenmonitor.com/Details/ArtMID/908/ArticleID/45897>

49 (Dukkah Platform - October 2021, <https://cutt.us/Jp2e6>)

Furthermore, the Houthi media's discourse and its evident hostility in the antagonism are likely to push the opposing party towards reciprocal hostility against the Houthis, often referred to as "political Hashemites." This means that the Houthis' own racism will incite others to adopt a counter-racist stance. Indications of this trend are already emerging within the Yemeni nationalist sentiment among many of the Houthi opponents. This sentiment will have consequences

for anyone who claims Hashemite lineage, even if some of them oppose the Houthi project itself. Some have even demanded that Salafis be stripped of their Yemeni identity due to their adherence

to a foreign, alienating, and supremacist identity that discriminates against the native population. They propose depriving them of official civil and military positions, as well as preventing them from engaging in political activities through parties or unions. Additionally, they suggest adding a constitutional provision that criminalizes any promotion of sectarian or lineage-based racism.

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On the other hand, the summer camps affiliated with the Houthis pose a serious danger that threatens the future of the country. When the war subsides, society will be faced with a large number of individuals who are filled with hatred and resentment, susceptible to violence and killing. These individuals could become the first mines on the path to peace. They may find an outlet to vent their hatred and animosity on the battlefronts as long as they remain open.

However, when these battlefronts close, society will be faced with a real catastrophe. The signs are evident in the streets of Sana'a, Azal, and villages in areas under Houthi militia control, with ongoing killings and near-daily crimes committed in those areas. Once the battles on the frontlines decrease, the situation would worsen if they come to a complete halt. 53

In addition to that, the manipulation of school agendas and the education system by competing groups is further fragmenting the shared identity, creating a new generation of conflicts. Students who have grown up in areas controlled by the Houthis perceive Sunnis as their enemies and view Houthi leaders as divine agents. Southern Yemenis, on the other hand, see northerners as occupiers and enemies due to these divisions and differences. Even if the South were to achieve independence, it is likely that animosities and hatred will persist because the young generation in Aden and the South will grow up believing that northerners are their enemies. Consequently, these generations will bear these grievances and animosities towards each other as they mature. Even if a political solution is found for Yemen in the near future, the likelihood of ongoing conflict remains high due to the fragmented identities that have been shaped and exploited by the war. 54

B. Methods of treatment and response

Abdalmughni, the Executive Director of the Manshaat Media and Development Studies Foundation, emphasizes the importance of professional, neutral media and conflict-sensitive journalism in approaching the current conflict from different angles that contribute to extinguishing the flames. He stresses the urgent need today to change this media behavior and create a different media environment that deals with the conflict from the perspective of the high human cost rather than the perspective of the victorious or defeated parties. He believes that the media has a significant role in peacebuilding and establishing its foundations, starting with abandoning hate speech and incitement, and replacing it with conflict-sensitive journalism in media coverage instead of taking sides in the conflict.

Abdalmughni acknowledges that bringing about this change in the near term is challenging but not impossible, especially in light of the growing awareness of the dangers of hate speech, incitement to violence, and their catastrophic repercussions in Yemen. (Source: International Journalists Network, June 30, 2021)

Ashraf Alraifi, the Secretary of the Freedom Committee at the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, believes that media outlets have an ethical responsibility to consider the public interest of the country, with peace being at the core of this interest, as achieving peace paves the way for other benefits. He adds that the media has a crucial role in peacebuilding by delivering a committed and professional discourse, seeking common ground among different parties, focusing on humanitarian issues, and avoiding fueling animosities and widening the gap of disagreements.

It has become necessary for political parties and various elites present in the Yemeni arena to be aware of and comprehend the danger of this discourse. They should incorporate within their programs initiatives that reject this discourse, in addition to rejecting any justifications or excuses for the existence and continuation of this discourse. (Yemeni Media Center - September 2021).

Furthermore, politicians and influential public figures can either fuel or greatly restrain hate speech. The latter is necessary to promote tolerance and respect for diversity within the established institutional and legal frameworks. At the regional level, there is also a need to strengthen the peace and security structure, as well as human rights, in Southeast Asia to provide a more cohesive regional approach to address hate speech and the associated violence among its members.

Non-governmental actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious communities, can also play a crucial role in mitigating hate speech and stopping its escalation, although their ability to maneuver and influence social outcomes depends on the broader political context. International actors have limited scope to change the internal dynamics of conflicts between groups and discrimination. However, sustained international attention and pressure on discriminatory violence can improve the situation if sufficient means, including support for local-level actors, are available.

Given that current local and international regulatory frameworks for mitigating hate speech are inadequate, it is crucial for governments and other stakeholders to prioritize building and strengthening regulatory frameworks to prevent the spread of hate speech and incitement on social media platforms and other public dissemination channels.

It can also be guided by five ways to confront hate speech in the media, which were formulated by researcher Bonnie Alice and published by UNESCO, in September 2021, as follows 56:

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- Regulating social media platforms without compromising the right to press freedom. Press freedom can be enhanced through education about media laws and ethics.
- Encouraging victims and witnesses to report hate speech-related crimes: Hate speech remains largely invisible because many victims are unaware of reporting channels or even understand that they are victims of hate speech.
- Ending impunity for hate crimes: Addressing impunity for hate crimes can be done by establishing monitoring and assessment units within newsrooms. These units would be tasked with monitoring hate speech trends, compiling reports, and drawing the attention of key institutions and civil society to them.





Conclusion

At the end of its report, SAM Organization concluded the following conclusions:

- One of the main reasons for the escalation of hate speech in Yemen during the war is the Houthi group's coup against the legitimate Yemeni state institutions and their adoption of an inciting and exclusionary discourse that encourages violence and the killing of opponents.
- Hate speech has contributed to the escalation of violence, extrajudicial killings, and violations against Yemeni civilians, all of which can be attributed to the ongoing hate speech propagated by various political and religious parties.
- The weakness of the Yemeni government's actions and its control over the media has provided a supportive factor for Yemeni organizations to use these platforms to spread their ideologies and ideas that incite hatred, racism, and the rejection of the other, even calling for their pursuit and killing.
- SAM believes that the intervention of some Arab countries has widened the gap between Yemeni factions, especially since each country has its own objectives in intervening in the Yemeni conflict, specifically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose interventions have had the greatest impact in deepening the discord among Yemenis, as each country supports one party at the expense of the other.
- The absence of an effective international role for international organizations, particularly the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, in the ongoing conflict in Yemen, despite the warring parties committing massacres and violations that blatantly violate international law, has not resulted in any real and serious stance from these organizations to help stop the successive violations in Yemen and assist in finding a way out of the current crisis the country is facing.

Recommendations



- Promoting education and awareness: Education and awareness of the values of tolerance and mutual respect should be enhanced through schools, educational institutions, and media outlets. Educational programs that promote the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence should be provided.
- Enforcing legislation that prohibits discrimination and criminalizes hate speech based on religious, regional, racial, or ethnic grounds.
- Promoting dialogue and understanding: Constructive dialogue and understanding among different population groups in Yemen should be encouraged. Dialogues and inclusive events can be organized to bring people from different backgrounds together to get to know each other and foster understanding and tolerance.
- Combating discrimination and promoting equality: Equality and discrimination should be promoted among all members of Yemeni society, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or national backgrounds.
- Human rights should be strengthened, and laws that prohibit discrimination and promote equality should be enforced.
- Religious leaders and civil society should play a role in spreading the message of tolerance and rejecting hate speech. They can work together to promote shared humanitarian values and achieve unity and peaceful coexistence.
- Encouraging responsible media: The media should be encouraged to adopt responsible practices and disseminate accurate and balanced information. Incitement, promotion of violence, or hate speech should be avoided.
- Enhancing justice and ending the conflict through promoting political dialogue and peaceful negotiations, thereby reducing tensions and promoting peaceful coexistence.







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They are a danger

Monitoring hate speech issued by parties to the conflict
Armed forces during the conflict in Yemen

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