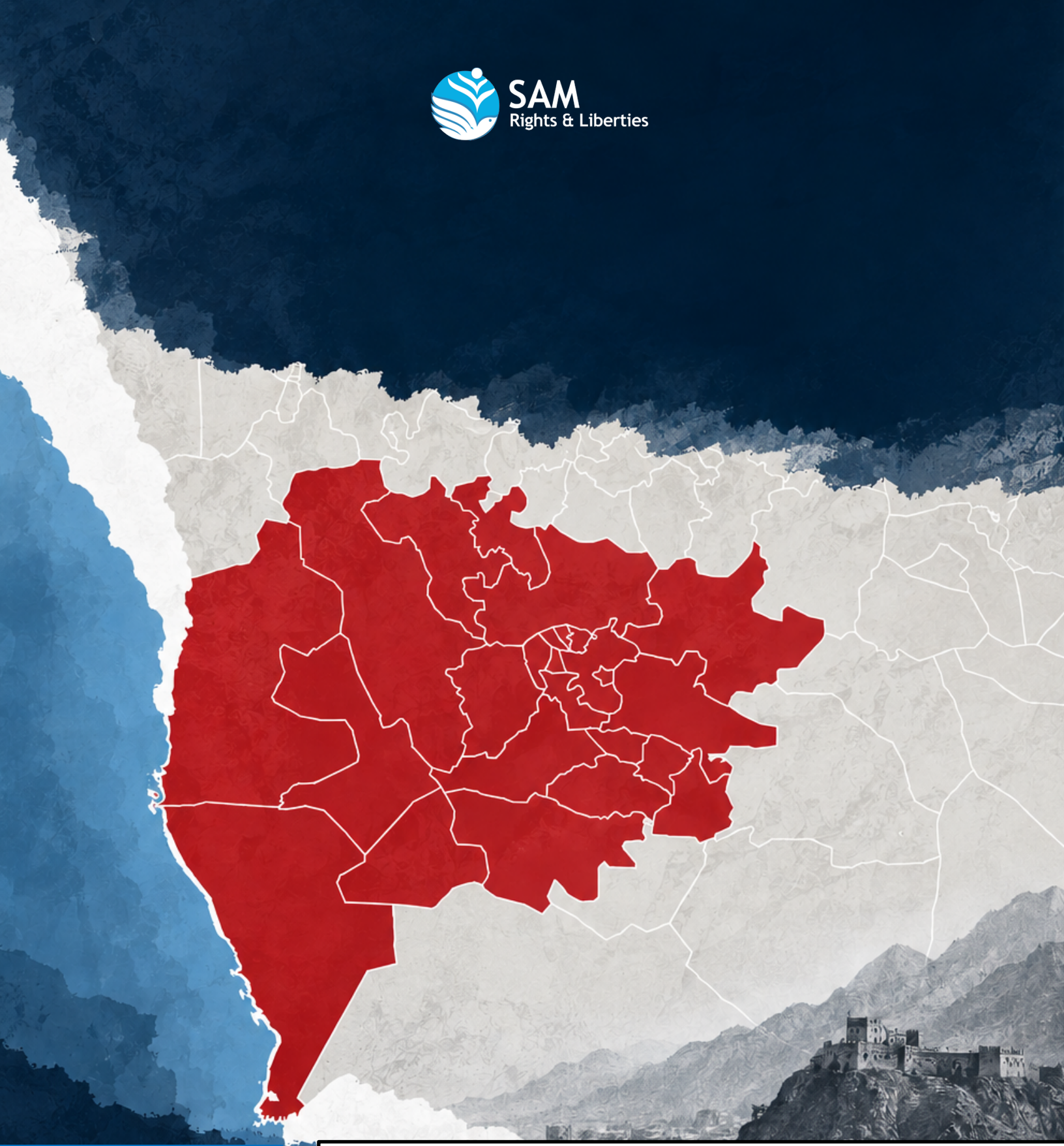
SAM
Rights & Liberties



Taiz Countryside: Civilians Under Attack

A human rights report documenting violations against civilians and civilian objects in the southern and western countrysides of Taiz.

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Who are we?

SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties

SAM is an independent, non-profit Yemeni human rights organization that began its activities in January 2016 and obtained a license to operate in December 2017. The organization aims to document human rights violations in Yemen, work to stop violations through advocacy in partnership with local and international organizations, raise human rights awareness through societal rights development, and hold human rights violators accountable in Yemen in collaboration with international mechanisms and human rights organizations.



SAM
Rights & Liberties

SAM for Rights and Liberties said that information it collected from field sources, together with reports published between September 3 and October 10, 2026, points to a series of violations and threats affecting civilians and civilian objects in villages and rural areas of southern and western Taiz Governorate. These incidents include artillery and mortar shelling and drone attacks, civilian deaths and injuries, house raids and searches, the detention of individuals whose fate remains unknown in some cases, and reports of civilian property destruction, the confiscation of communication devices, and searches of mobile phones. The organization distinguishes cases documented through its fieldwork from incidents reported by public sources, while continuing to verify unresolved details.

These incidents have occurred against a backdrop of expanding hostilities, which began with the Houthi group's escalation of military operations against government forces on September 3, 2026, along the western coast of Taiz Governorate. Subsequent shifts in control over areas around Bab al-Mandab and the western coast were followed by the spread of clashes into the southern and western rural belt of Taiz, extending through Al-Hujariyah, Al-Turbah, Al-Misrakh, and adjoining villages to the south, as well as Jabal Habashi and the western countryside. Lines of control and military movements on these fronts remain subject to rapid change, making it essential not to present any evolving battlefield situation as final.

These areas are far more than rural extensions of Taiz city. They contain substantial population centers and form part of a network of vital roads and corridors used by residents to reach hospitals, markets, and essential services. They also connect Taiz city with Al-Hujariyah, Lahj, Aden, and the western coast. Consequently, the spread of fighting into these areas has direct consequences for civilian lives, freedom of movement, and access to basic necessities.

This geography has particular humanitarian significance for the people of Taiz. During years of closures of the main roads into and out of the city, civilians were forced to rely on lengthy, difficult mountain routes through these areas to reach other governorates, directly affecting the movement of patients and the transport of food, medicines, and humanitarian aid. Human Rights Watch documented how the closure of Taiz's roads forced residents to use dangerous mountain routes, turning journeys that once took minutes into journeys lasting hours and obstructing the movement of people, goods, and essential services.

As fighting now expands into these areas, concerns are mounting that continued clashes or the closure of vital roads and corridors could subject Taiz city to even harsher isolation and reproduce the conditions of the siege in a more severe form. This could expose more than two million people to growing risks concerning access to food, medicine, medical treatment, and safe movement. Children, women, older persons, patients, and other especially vulnerable groups would be the first to bear the consequences of any prolonged closure or disruption of these routes.

SAM considers that the seriousness of this expansion cannot be measured solely by the number of people killed or injured, but also by the forced changes it may impose on residents' daily lives. Continued fighting across this geographical area could displace more families, restrict movement between villages and the city, increase the cost of accessing essential services, and undermine the ability of hospitals, markets, and supply chains to function normally. As escalation continues, areas that once served as corridors for daily life and mobility could become zones of fear and isolation, deepening the vulnerability of residents and multiplying the impact of the war on those most in need of protection.

Shifting Frontlines Increase the Risk of Road Closures

During September, the southern and western fronts of Taiz witnessed changing troop movements and clashes, including along the Al-Shamayatayn, Jabal Habashi, and Al-Aqroud axes. SAM includes this context to explain the risks to villages and roads, not to establish responsibility for any specific incident or make definitive claims about lines of control that change as military operations unfold.

On October 7, local coverage of a statement attributed to the Popular Resistance in Al-Misrakh reported its announcement of a withdrawal following mediation, under understandings concerning non-pursuit, the release of detainees, and the opening of roads for civilians' needs. This development illustrates the importance of keeping civilian corridors open, but does not in itself establish whether these undertakings were implemented on the ground.

The Beginning of the September Escalation: Shelling of Villages, Displacement Camps, and a School in Al-Wazi'iyah

On September 3, 2026, the Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights reported that artillery, rocket, and drone attacks attributed to the Houthi group struck residential areas in Maqbanah, Jabal Habashi, Al-Kadhah, and Al-Dhabab, as well as the Al-Rahbah, Al-Rajhi, and Wadi Al-Hanayah camps for displaced persons. The ministry said that shells landed near one of the camps, prompting dozens of families to flee once again. It also reported that a missile hit Karim School in Al-Wazi'iyah while classes were in session, causing damage. These incidents are cited on the basis of the official statement, without treating the reported damage or casualty figures as exhaustive.

On the same day, the ministry announced that Fouad Muqbil Hassan had been killed by sniper fire in the Shubayyah area of Maqbanah District, in front of his home. The incident requires an investigation into the location from which the shot was fired, the victim's status, and the surrounding circumstances, as do the attacks affecting displaced communities and an educational institution.

September 4–5: Civilian Casualties on the Hayjat Al-Abd Road and in Al-Kadhah and Al-Rahbah

On September 4, the Yemeni News Agency, Saba, reported a ballistic missile attack near the Al-Mokha junction, an area used for the movement of civilians and goods. Accounts concerning casualties require comparison with hospital records; accordingly, no separate, unverified casualty total is presented here.

On September 5, the government news agency Saba reported that four civilians were killed and nine others injured when a ballistic missile struck a gathering of civilians on the Hayjat Al-Abd road south of Taiz. An attack on a road used by civilians illustrates the direct risks to travel and access to services and supplies.

Saba also reported that day that four civilians, including three children and a woman, were injured by sniper fire in Al-Kadhah and Al-Rahbah, western Taiz. It named the injured as Mahfouz Mahfouz Salem Abdulrazzaq (7), Nunan Mahfouz Salem Abdulrazzaq (13), Safaa Mahfouz Salem Abdulrazzaq (30), and Turki Hazza Ahmed Hizam (8). These names are reproduced as published in the source, without prejudging independent medical and judicial verification.

September 12–13: Shelling in Al-Shaqab and Rising Displacement and Casualty Figures

On September 12, the Ministry of Human Rights, in a statement issued the following day, reported shelling in Al-Shaqab, south of Taiz, that killed a pregnant woman and her unborn child. It also cited shelling of populated areas and displacement camps in Taiz, Al-Hodeidah, and Marib during the escalation beginning on September 3. This incident must not be counted as part of the Al-Shaqab casualty toll on October 9, as it occurred on a separate date.

On September 13, the ministry estimated, on the basis of incidents and reports it said it had documented in several governorates since September 3, that 150 civilians had been killed, more than 200 injured, and approximately 85,000 displaced. These are preliminary figures covering multiple governorates, not a tally specific to rural Taiz, and must not be added to figures appearing later in this report.

September 16: UNICEF Warns of Disruptions to Schools and Health Facilities

In a statement issued on September 16, UNICEF reported that more than 104,000 people, including over 57,000 children, had been displaced within two weeks. According to information received at that time, at least nine children had been killed, 12 injured, and three reported missing since September 3. UNICEF also reported disruptions to services at 26 health facilities it supported, and the closure or suspension of classes at 243 schools affecting more than 137,000 students, in areas including western Taiz and the western coast. These indicators cover a broader geographical area than the incidents documented through this report's fieldwork.

September 18: Three Children Killed in Al-Turayrah Village, Al-Wazi'iyah

On September 18, the Yemeni News Agency, Saba, citing local sources, reported that three children—Noureddine Yaqoub Abduh Al-Dharafi (4), Asawer Fahd Mohammed Ghanem Al-Dharafi (14), and Tala Mohammed Ahmed Al-Dharafi (2)—were killed in shelling attributed to the Houthi group in Al-Turayrah village, Al-Dharifah subdistrict, Al-Wazi'iyah District, western Taiz. The deaths of these three children require an independent investigation to establish the source of the shelling, the presumed target, and the precautions taken.

September 18: Attacks on Humanitarian Facilities and Programs in Al-Khawkhah

On September 18, the Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights condemned attacks, looting, and threats that it said had affected medical clinics, food and medicine warehouses, and water and shelter projects in Al-Khawkhah and areas of the western coast. The ministry stated that these practices threatened the continuity of services funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre. The details of each incident still require independent field corroboration.

September 21: Risks of Shelling to Markets and Roads Near Bab al-Mandab

Regarding an attack on a popular market in front of the Bab al-Mandab commercial complex in Al-Hajaf, Al-Mudaribah wa Ras Al-Arah District, Lahj Governorate, on September 21, the Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights stated that the market had been struck by two ballistic missiles that landed approximately one hour apart. According to the ministry's initial reports, civilians were injured and vehicles and commercial property damaged. The incident is included in the geographical context of the southern corridors linking Taiz and Bab al-Mandab, not as an incident occurring within Taiz Governorate. The preliminary information does not permit a final casualty count without an independent investigation.

September 23: Attack on Amr ibn Al-As School Sheltering Displaced Persons in Lahj

In a statement issued on September 25, the Ministry of Human Rights documented an attack involving two missiles on Amr ibn Al-As Secondary School in the Malabiyah area of Al-Mudaribah wa Ras Al-Arah District, Lahj Governorate, at approximately 7 p.m. on September 23. According to the ministry, three civilians were killed, four injured, and the school damaged. This incident is included as part of the geographical corridor connected to Taiz and Bab al-Mandab, rather than as an event inside Taiz Governorate.

September 24: WHO Warns of Pressure on Health Services from Casualties and Displacement

In a statement published through the United Nations on September 24, the World Health Organization reported rising health needs as a result of fighting and displacement. It recorded a combined total of 3,672 deaths and injuries between August 6 and September 18 in the areas covered by its monitoring, comprising 674 deaths and 2,998 injuries, and noted that Taiz and the western coast accounted for 1,349 cases within this total. These figures must not be interpreted as the number of people killed by any one party or added to SAM's incident totals without reconciling the respective methodologies.

September 25: UNICEF Confirms Rising Child Casualties

In a statement issued on September 25, UNICEF confirmed that it had verified at least 15 children killed and 14 injured since September 3, with three children still reported missing.

It renewed its warnings about the disruption of education and the effects of displacement on children. This tally covers a longer period than the September 16 figures and supersedes them for comparative purposes; the two must not be added together.

When War Reaches the Village

The dangers of fighting in rural Taiz differ from those of an isolated military front: clashes take place amid inhabited villages, where combat positions intersect with residents' daily lives. According to incidents documented by SAM, armed groups affiliated with the Houthi group have advanced into some villages and rural areas and taken positions on high ground and hills overlooking population centers and roads. This increases the risks of shelling, sniper fire, and road closures, and brings civilians into direct contact with military operations.

In this environment, homes, farmland, roads, mosques, small markets, and water sources are situated close together. Children, women, older persons, and people without the means or ability to leave quickly when clashes erupt live in these communities. The spread of fighting into or around villages therefore places residents at greater risk, whether they are inside their homes or traveling in search of food, medical care, or safer areas.

The use of medium weapons, mortar rounds, drones, and other explosive weapons in such an environment increases the likelihood of civilian casualties, particularly when the nature

of targets has not been adequately verified or means and methods of warfare that minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects to the greatest feasible extent have not been selected.

The consequences of these operations do not end when the shelling or clashes cease. Fear of renewed attacks or sniper fire may drive families from their homes and farms, restrict movement between villages, and obstruct access to markets, hospitals, and water sources. Roads that once served as lifelines for daily activities may become dangerous areas or frontlines, increasing the risk of displacement, isolation, and loss of livelihoods.

The incidents documented by SAM, while verification of certain cases continues, point to multiple patterns of violations and threats facing civilians, including shelling of populated areas, injuries from drone attacks, killings inside homes, raids and detention, entry into and searches of dwellings, and reports of destruction of homes and civilian property.

International Law: A Village Does Not Become a Military Target

International humanitarian law requires parties to the conflict to distinguish at all times between civilians and persons who may lawfully be targeted, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Homes, villages, and other civilian objects remain protected from attack unless they meet the criteria for a military objective under the law.

An entire village or residential area does not become a military objective merely because fighters are present within or near it. Even where a legitimate military objective exists, all feasible precautions must be taken to verify the target and avoid, or at least minimize, civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects. Expected civilian harm must also be assessed, and an attack must not be launched if that harm would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.

SAM emphasizes that the identity or status of a home's owner or occupant does not, by itself, determine its legal classification. A house owned or formerly occupied by a military commander remains, in principle, a civilian object and does not lose that protection merely because of its owner's identity. It may be treated as a military objective only if, in the circumstances prevailing at the time, it makes an effective contribution to military action and attacking it would offer a definite military advantage in accordance with the requirements of international humanitarian law.

With respect to roads and corridors, military considerations do not give any party the right to use movement restrictions to starve civilians or deprive them of supplies indispensable to their survival. Humanitarian relief must also be facilitated for populations in need. In the case of Taiz, human rights organizations have previously warned about the grave humanitarian effects of road closures on food, medicine, and residents' freedom of movement.

Documentation Methodology

In preparing this report, SAM for Rights and Liberties relied on information that it said its monitors and field sources had gathered in several villages and rural areas of Taiz. The information covered civilian deaths and injuries, shelling, raids and detention, entry into and searches of homes, and damage to civilian objects. This material was supplemented by published statements and reports from journalistic, human rights, and humanitarian sources, with each addition attributed publicly to its source within the body of the report. Where possible, the organization compared information from multiple sources and reviewed casualty details, locations, and timings. Incidents for which verification remained incomplete were kept under review, rather than presented as final findings or combined into aggregate totals without examining possible overlap.

Documentation faced significant security and field challenges as fighting moved into villages and rural areas. SAM monitors said that fear of reprisals and detention made some residents and witnesses reluctant to speak or share information, particularly over telephone calls or messaging applications. Some interviewees also expressed fears of communications surveillance in Houthi-controlled areas, given the group's control over local telecommunications infrastructure. This limited monitors' ability to conduct extended interviews or follow up directly on certain cases.

SAM took these risks into account when collecting information, including by protecting the identities of certain witnesses and sources and withholding details that could identify them or place them in danger. The organization emphasizes that access difficulties and security concerns surrounding documentation mean that the cases described in this report do not necessarily represent a complete record of violations occurring in rural Taiz. Rather, they are the incidents SAM was able to access and document under the prevailing conditions.

Shelling of Populated Areas in Wadi Thabat and Al-Mun'im Village

On September 30, 2026, SAM documented a mortar-shelling incident in Wadi Thabat, east of Taiz city. According to information gathered from field sources, the rounds were fired from the direction of positions that were under Houthi control at the time of the attack in the Tabbat Al-Sallal area.

The shelling killed 15-year-old Youssef Abdulwarith Ali Mohammed, who sustained multiple shrapnel wounds to the head. Awatif Abdullah, 29, was also injured by shrapnel in various parts of her body.

Information reviewed by SAM indicates that the shells landed in a populated area. At the time of preparing this report, the organization had not been able to independently verify the presence of a specific military objective at or immediately around the impact site, or to identify the target the attacking party had sought to strike.

This incident raises serious concerns about the attack's compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law on distinction and precautions in attack. A final legal assessment would require further investigation to establish, among other matters, the precise launch and impact locations, the presumed military objective, the type and accuracy of the ammunition used, the information available to the attacking force at the time, and the precautions taken to avoid or minimize harm to civilians.

In a separate incident, SAM documented the killing of 17-year-old Ahmed Fawaz and the injury of his mother when a shell struck Al-Mun'im village. Preliminary information received from field sources indicates that the shell was fired from an area under Houthi control. The date of this incident has not been conclusively established; it is therefore included as a case still undergoing documentation and is not counted among the dated incidents within the reporting period.

At the time of preparing this report, SAM had not completed verification of the incident's date and some of the surrounding military circumstances, including the possible presence of a military objective in the area at the time. The organization continues to gather information before reaching a final conclusion regarding the legality of the attack and responsibility for it.

Nevertheless, the impact of explosive munitions in inhabited villages and areas, causing civilian deaths and injuries, demonstrates the dangers posed by the extension of hostilities into rural communities—not only to residents and their property, but also to the local social fabric. Continued fighting inside villages, together with potential killings, raids, detention, and property destruction, could exacerbate tensions among residents, increase the risk of revenge attacks and retaliatory violence, and leave social consequences that persist long after military operations end.

Al-Aqroud: Child Reportedly Killed in Al-Najadi Village in Early October

A child was reportedly killed in Al-Najadi village in the Al-Aqroud area in early October when a shell struck the family's home. The material available for this version does not include an independent firsthand account or medical record establishing the incident's date and the victim's identity. Accordingly, the case remains under verification and is not included in any confirmed casualty tally.

Jabal Dhahih: Shelling Near Populated Villages

On October 7, 2026, SAM documented artillery and mortar shelling of Jabal Dhahih and surrounding villages in Al-Misrakh District, amid armed clashes that had been taking place in the area since the early morning hours.

According to information collected by the organization from field sources, the shelling extended into areas near population centers and killed Hasibah Abdulwahid, a resident of Al-Naqil village at the foot of the mountain.

The available information indicates that military activity was taking place in the area at the time of the attack. However, SAM had not been able to independently verify the nature of the specific military objectives at which the shelling was directed or establish the precise launch and impact locations of the shells.

The incident is particularly serious because, according to field information received by the organization, it occurred amid attempts by Houthi fighters to advance toward populated villages and rural areas. The movement of fighters and clashes into the vicinity of

communities, together with the occupation of nearby high ground, places civilians, their homes, and their travel routes in direct proximity to military operations and increases the likelihood of shelling, sniper fire, and forced displacement.

The incident therefore raises serious questions about respect for the rules of distinction and precautions in attack, particularly given the use of explosive weapons near inhabited areas. A final legal assessment requires establishing the nature of the presumed military objectives, the types and accuracy of weapons and munitions used, their launch and impact locations, the information available to the attacking force, and whether feasible precautions were taken to avoid or minimize civilian casualties.

Jabal Habashi, Al-Dhabab, and Al-Turbah: Additional Victims on October 2 and 5

On October 2, Al-Masdar Online reported that Mohammed Muheeb Saeed Abduh Qasim, a 14-day-old infant, died from shrapnel wounds to the head in the Al-Dhabab area, while another child was wounded by shrapnel. Local accounts also pointed to shelling incidents in villages of Jabal Habashi, including Anaqib. However, the original source does not provide enough detail to establish all the victims attributed to these incidents without the risk of overlap.

On October 5, Al-Masdar Online, citing local sources, reported that the child Radwan Mohammed Abdulqader died of injuries caused by sniper fire in Jabal Habashi District, western Taiz. The incident requires an investigation into the source of the gunfire, the circumstances in which it was fired, and the child's safety at the time.

Jabal Habashi: Civilian Injured by Shrapnel

October 2: Woman Killed and Two Civilian Women Injured in Al-Jashash, Wadi Al-Qadi

Al-Masdar Online reported that Amani Yassin Al-Zuraiqi, 26, was killed and two other women injured in artillery shelling attributed to the Houthi group in the Al-Jashash neighborhood of Wadi Al-Qadi, northern Taiz, on October 2. The incident requires a review of medical records, the trajectories of the shells, and the presumed military objectives.

On the evening of October 4, 2026, the emergency department of Al-Thawra General Hospital in Taiz city received Abdullah Mahyoub Sultan Al-Buraihi, 60, from the Al-Adaf area of Jabal Habashi District. According to medical and field information obtained by SAM, Al-Buraihi sustained multiple shrapnel wounds to his legs in an incident in Al-Adaf. Information received by the organization indicates that the injury occurred during an attack attributed to Houthi forces.

Al-Hanjar Area: Three Civilians Injured

On October 5, 2026, SAM documented the arrival of three injured civilians at Al-Thawra General Hospital in Taiz city following one or more incidents in the Al-Hanjar area.

Abdulaziz Amin Ali, 25, a resident of Wadi Al-Qadi, arrived at the hospital at approximately 4:40 p.m. with a fracture to his left leg. According to preliminary information received by SAM, his injury resulted from a drone attack attributed to the Houthi group.

At approximately the same time, the hospital also received Muna Ali Saif Abdullah, 60, from Wadi Al-Qadi. She had shrapnel injuries to her legs, right thigh, and left shoulder. Preliminary information indicates that she was injured in a drone attack in the same area.

Mufeed Abdulmajid Al-Dhababi, 30, from Bir Basha, also arrived at the hospital at approximately 4:30 p.m. with shrapnel wounds to his left thigh and head following an incident in Al-Hanjar.

SAM is working to establish whether the three injuries resulted from a single attack or several attacks occurring close together, and to verify the nature of any potential military objectives in the area, the type of drone or munitions used, and the civilians' proximity to the presumed target.

Al-Hanjar: Discrepancies Between Initial Field Findings and Published Reports

In addition to the three cases about which SAM obtained preliminary field information, local reports of shelling west of Taiz city contain other accounts of fatalities and injuries in the Al-Hanjar area on October 5. SAM has not been able to obtain a consolidated medical record establishing the number of casualties or whether these accounts concern the same incident. It therefore does not add unverified figures to its field-based casualty tally.

To prevent duplication, SAM does not automatically combine the casualty figures from the two sources. It considers establishing the final number of injured persons, the type of weapon used, and whether the incidents occurred simultaneously or separately to require examination of medical records, witness statements, and relevant visual material.

Al-Aqroud, Al-Mawasit, and Al-Wazi'iyah: Deaths and Injuries in Village Shelling on October 6

On October 6, Al-Masdar Online reported that a mortar round struck the home of Darham Ahmed Amir's family in Al-Sarm village, Al-Aqroud area, Al-Misrakh District, killing several family members, including women and children. SAM had received accounts naming Darham Ahmed Amir, his wife Ruqayyah Ali Abdulrab Ali, and their granddaughter Aisha Imad Darham among the dead, and Luna Mujeeb Mahmoud Saif among the injured. The final casualty count requires independent review to resolve discrepancies in names and numbers across the various accounts.

Local sources quoted by official authorities reported that a woman was killed and four civilians injured, including a child and two women, when shelling struck the villages of Al-Dum, Hajarah, and Al-Manawid in Bani Youssef, Al-Mawasit District, on October 6. Al-Masdar Online published details of the same shelling alongside other incidents in Qadas and Al-Misrakh. These accounts should not be combined before verifying the dates and locations of the incidents, to avoid double-counting victims.

In a statement dated October 6, the Yemeni Ministry of Interior said that villages in Qadas had been shelled, that some villages were surrounded, and that residents and injured people faced difficulties leaving to obtain medical treatment. These reports require field verification regarding the continuation of such restrictions, the parties responsible for imposing them, and their effects on patients and humanitarian needs.

Raids and Detentions in Sami' District

SAM documented house raids carried out by forces affiliated with the Houthi group in the villages of Al-Madha'abah and Waq'an, in Al-Jabal subdistrict of Sami' District. According to information collected by the organization, the raids resulted in the detention of Mohammed Ahmed Abduh and Hazza Abdullah Naji.

At the time of preparing this report, SAM had been unable to obtain official information on the legal grounds for detaining Mohammed Ahmed Abduh and Hazza Abdullah Naji, their whereabouts, or whether they had been allowed to contact their families. Statements collected by the organization suggest that their detention may be connected to their opposition to the Houthi group and rejection of its control, raising concerns about arbitrary deprivation of liberty. The continued absence of official information requires urgent

follow-up to establish their legal status and conditions of detention and to determine whether additional elements potentially constituting violations related to enforced disappearance are present.

Sami': Report of a Civilian Killed Inside His Home in Al-Salaf

On October 2, Al-Masdar Online, citing local sources, reported the killing of Hamoud Abdullah Saif Al-Rajhi inside his home in Sami' District after he reportedly refused to allow Houthi-affiliated gunmen to use his house as a sniper position. This account requires an investigation into the circumstances, the perpetrators' identities, and how the incident unfolded.

SAM emphasizes that this account requires an independent field investigation into the identity of those responsible, the sequence of events, the nature of any military use of the house, and whether the victim was deliberately targeted. A dwelling does not lose its civilian character merely because an armed party wishes to use it for military purposes.

Detention of Mohammed Abdulsalam Nasser Ali in Al-Mokha

In Al-Mokha city, SAM received field information indicating that Houthi-affiliated gunmen raided the home of Mohammed Abdulsalam Nasser Ali, took him to an unknown location, and confiscated his mobile phone and identity card.

According to information gathered by the organization, his family had not, by the time this report was prepared, received official information on his whereabouts, the authority holding him, or the reasons for his deprivation of liberty.

These circumstances raise serious concerns about his safety and legal safeguards. The detaining authority must disclose his whereabouts, inform his family of his condition, and allow him to contact them and obtain the necessary legal protections.

If a person is deprived of liberty and this is followed by a refusal to acknowledge the detention or concealment of the person's fate or whereabouts, thereby placing them outside the protection of the law, the elements of enforced disappearance may be present, depending on the legal and factual circumstances of the case.

October 8: Young Girl Killed and Her Sister and Mother Injured by Sniper Fire in Shahran

On October 8, Ahmed Al-Bakari reported that four-year-old Nesma Mohammed Ghaleb was killed and her seven-year-old sister Basma and their mother injured by gunfire attributed to a Houthi sniper in the Shahran area of Nimrah subdistrict, Jabal Habashi District. The incident requires an independent investigation into the source of the gunfire, with protection for the family and witnesses.

October 8: Report of a Teacher Killed Inside His Home in Al-Mahsha

On October 8, Mohammed Al-Haidari reported the killing of teacher Abdulkarim Qasim Hassan Al-Buraihi, 58, in Al-Mahsha, Jabal Habashi. Al-Mushahid Net quoted a relative of the victim as saying that gunmen raided his home and shot him in front of family members. The incident must be investigated, including verification that the victim was not participating in hostilities.

October 8: Attacks Expand Toward Al-Adaf, Al-Armah, and Al-Shariq

On October 8, journalist Fares Al-Humairi reported that the Houthi group had intensified attacks involving artillery and rocket shelling on villages in Jabal Habashi District, and that clashes had spread to Al-Shariq after fighters entered Al-Adaf and Al-Armah villages. These accounts demonstrate the dangers of fighting in and around villages but do not, on their own, establish an accurate casualty or property-loss total.

October 9–10: Deaths and Injuries in Al-Shaqab Shelling and Renewed Attacks on Villages

On October 9, Al-Masdar Online reported that a child, Mohammed Abdullah Abduh Muqbil, and a woman, Dhikrayat Abdulwahid Ahmed Yahya, had been killed and six civilians injured in shelling in the Al-Shaqab area of Sabir Al-Mawadim District. The Taiz Military Axis Media Center, by contrast, reported four injured people. SAM treats this incident separately from the September shelling of the same area and records the discrepancy in casualty numbers pending verification.

On October 10, journalist Fares Al-Humairi, citing residents, reported shelling of inhabited villages in Al-Shaqab amid continuing clashes involving government forces, the Popular Resistance, and the Houthi group. His account did not provide a separate casualty figure for this latest shelling.

October 8–9: Reports of Minefields and Explosive Devices in Dhubab and Bab al-Mandab

On October 8, Al-Masdar Online published video footage that it described as documenting landmines planted in Dhubab. On October 9, Baseem Al-Janani cited a military source reporting mines and explosive devices concealed in concrete blocks near the Bab al-Mandab road. Definitively attributing responsibility for each mine requires verification of the locations and dates of the recordings and examination of the explosives.

Visual materials circulated concerning minefields and clearance operations include footage published by Al-Masdar Online concerning Dhubab, another recording of a mine-clearance operation, footage published by Taha Saleh from the coastal front, and an additional recording from another location. These are preliminary visual indicators that require independent investigation and do not constitute a forensic determination regarding the material shown.

October 9: UN Warning of a Return to Full-Scale War and Growing Humanitarian Needs

In a United Nations briefing to the Security Council on October 9, Special Envoy Hans Grundberg warned of a return to full-scale war and intensified fighting south and west of Taiz and in areas connected to Lahj. UN officials reported that more than 200,000 people had been displaced since the beginning of August and approximately 4,000 had fled across Bab al-Mandab. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had recorded

at least 46 civilian deaths and more than 130 injuries since August. These figures span multiple areas and do not represent a tally for rural Taiz alone.

Raids and House Searches in Qadas and Bani Hammad

SAM also received preliminary information about Houthi-affiliated forces entering and searching several homes in southern rural Taiz. These included the home of Brigadier General Abdulrahman Al-Shamsani, Commander of the 35th Armored Brigade, in Al-Ashrouh, Qadas; the home of Colonel Adel Al-Hammadi, Operations Chief of the 35th Armored Brigade, in Bani Hammad; and the home of Brigadier General Jamil Aqlan, Commander of the Special Security Forces, in Al-Mukaisha, Qadas.

The organization is working to independently verify the circumstances of the raids, whether the homeowners or their family members were present at the time, and whether searches were accompanied by confiscation of property, vandalism, or detention.

According to Displacement Tracking Matrix data published by the International Organization for Migration on October 7, approximately 200,161 people (33,359 families) were displaced between August 1 and October 6, 2026, while the cumulative total reached 201,217 people (33,535 families) since the escalation began in June 2026. Taiz received 114,708 displaced persons, representing 57% of the cumulative total. These figures cover a broader period than the weekly monitoring reports and must not be added to those weekly figures.

SAM stresses that a homeowner's military status does not, in itself, transform a house into a military objective. A home remains, in principle, a civilian object unless, in the circumstances prevailing at the time of the attack, it is used in a way that makes an

effective contribution to military action and its destruction or neutralization offers a definite military advantage. Raids and searches must not be used to retaliate against military personnel's relatives or punish their families; looting and arbitrary destruction of property are also prohibited.

Jabal Habashi: House Raids in Kahah, Al-Mashaar, and Dhi Al-Shahran

On October 7, journalist Fares Al-Humairi, citing residents, reported that the Houthi group had conducted house raids and searches in Kahah, Al-Mashaar, and Dhi Al-Shahran villages in Jabal Habashi District. Crater Sky published similar local accounts, without confirmed information about the number of houses affected or whether anyone was detained.

These reports raise concerns about residents' safety and the inviolability of their homes, and require documentation of any judicial warrants, seizures, or threats accompanying the searches.

Al-Hujariyah and Al-Turbah: Starlink Device Confiscations and Mobile Phone Searches

On October 7, Al-Thawri newspaper, citing local sources, reported the confiscation of Starlink satellite internet devices in parts of Al-Hujariyah, the detention of community figures, and demands that some sheikhs and local notables provide undertakings and guarantees concerning individuals' participation in fighting. The newspaper also reported that female committees affiliated with the Houthi group visited homes and searched

residents' phones in Al-Turbah city and villages of Dhubhan, and that nighttime movement restrictions had been imposed in certain locations.

This information overlaps with Fares Al-Humairi's reporting on Starlink confiscation campaigns in Al-Turbah, as well as Mohammed Al-Haidari's October 8 report on the arrival of members of the Zainabiyat in western rural Taiz and searches of homes and mobile phones. It was not possible to independently verify the number of devices confiscated, persons detained, or legal orders underpinning these measures.

SAM considers that arbitrary searches of phone contents and correspondence, and the confiscation of communication devices, undermine privacy and people's ability to seek help and access information. They also increase the risks of surveillance and compelled disclosure of personal information faced by residents and personnel engaged in humanitarian monitoring.

Taiz: Complaints of YemenNet Service Disruption on October 8

On October 8, Fares Al-Humairi reported complaints from users that YemenNet internet service had been unavailable across extensive areas of Taiz Governorate for several hours, following days of noticeably slow connectivity. Sufficient independent technical evidence was not available to establish the cause of the disruption or demonstrate any connection with the raids or the campaign to confiscate communication devices.

The organization emphasizes the importance of disclosing the technical or administrative reasons for any widespread outage and ensuring that telecommunications services are not used as a means of collective punishment or to cut off information flows in conflict-affected areas.

The Threat Extends Beyond Villages to Taiz's Lifeline

SAM believes that the seriousness of current developments in rural Taiz should not be assessed solely by the number of direct casualties. The spread of military operations across this area threatens to cause wider and more enduring humanitarian effects, undermining residents' freedom of movement and access to essential services and increasing the vulnerability of communities that have borne the consequences of conflict and road closures for years.

Al-Turbah, Al-Hujariyah, Al-Misrakh, and the roads stretching southward, together with Jabal Habashi and the western countryside, form part of an interconnected geographical network used by large numbers of civilians to travel between villages, Taiz city, and neighboring governorates. Patients, food, medicines, fuel, goods, and services also move along these routes. The network became especially important during years when several of the city's main entrances were closed, turning alternative rural and mountain roads into indispensable routes for civilian life.

Past experience has shown that restrictions on road access in Taiz are not merely a transport issue: their effects rapidly spread to other sectors. The cost of transporting goods rises, patients face greater difficulty reaching health facilities, families' access to markets and services declines, and humanitarian assistance and local economic activity are disrupted. The closure of these roads amid the current escalation could therefore produce cumulative humanitarian effects extending far beyond the immediate areas of fighting.

In this context, SAM warns of a chain of humanitarian consequences that may begin with shelling, fear, and displacement from villages, then extend to the disruption of roads and corridors and the weakening of supply and service delivery, before affecting Taiz city and its surroundings through higher living costs, difficulties accessing medical treatment and basic necessities, and an expanding number of people affected by the conflict. If this dynamic continues, it could recreate levels of isolation that Taiz residents experienced during years of siege and road closures.

SAM considers that protecting civilian roads and corridors must be treated as an integral part of protecting the population, rather than an issue considered only after movement has ceased or a humanitarian emergency has occurred. All parties to the conflict must therefore take into account the foreseeable impact of their operations on civilian movement, supplies, and services from the planning stage of military operations, and take feasible measures to prevent military expansion from developing into a wider humanitarian crisis.

A Pattern Requiring Independent Investigation

SAM considers that the incidents it documented through fieldwork, together with those reported by journalistic and human rights sources during the reporting period, reveal overlapping dangers and potential violations affecting the people of rural Taiz. These include shelling with explosive weapons and drones, killings inside homes, raids, detention, searches of dwellings and mobile phones, destruction of civilian property, and disruptions to communications and movement. Each case requires an independent

investigation to establish its facts and responsibility, without assuming that all incidents have been proven to the same evidentiary standard.

Civilian casualties do not automatically establish that a war crime has occurred. A legal assessment must examine each incident in light of the intended target, the type of weapon used, the information available to the attacking force, the precautions taken, and the foreseeable harm to civilians in relation to the military advantage sought.

Nevertheless, international humanitarian law prohibits deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, and obliges parties to the conflict to take all feasible precautions to spare the population the effects of military operations. The intentional killing of a protected person, or deliberately directing an attack against civilians, may constitute a war crime when the relevant legal elements are met.

SAM believes that the recurrence of these incidents over a short period and across multiple locations makes it necessary to look beyond them as isolated events. Each incident must be investigated individually, while also examining whether, taken together, they reveal a broader pattern of conduct that systematically or repeatedly affects the protection of civilians and civilian property in areas into which fighting is spreading.

Displacement from Rural Taiz: Recent Quantitative Indicators

International Organization for Migration data for September 27–October 3, 2026 recorded the displacement of 3,633 families, equivalent to 21,798 people, across the areas covered by monitoring in Yemen. Of these, 2,838 families moved into or within Taiz Governorate, including 1,350 families in Al-Shamayatayn, 650 in Jabal Habashi, and 534 in Al-Ma'afir. The data also identified Al-Wazi'iyah, Jabal Habashi, and Al-Shamayatayn among the principal districts of origin for displaced families in the governorate. These figures relate to displacement recorded during that specific week and do not represent the total number of displaced persons in Taiz.

During the week of September 20–26, the International Organization for Migration also recorded the movement of 1,450 families into or within Taiz, including 630 families in Al-Ma'afir, 250 in Al-Misrakh, and 222 in Al-Shamayatayn. This figure covers two days preceding the beginning of the reporting period used here; it is therefore used as a contextual indicator, not as an additional figure exclusively attributable to the period starting September 22.

These data add a tangible dimension to concerns about the spread of fighting within villages and along rural roads. Displacement is associated not only with direct losses but also with the possibility of interrupted supplies, restricted movement, and the absence of a sense of safety.

Potential Economic and Humanitarian Risks of Renewed Isolation of Taiz

The organization calls for independent investigations into sniper attacks and civilian killings in Shahran and Al-Mahsha, shelling in Al-Shaqab and on the Hayjat Al-Abd road and near the Al-Mokha junction, and attacks affecting displacement camps and schools, with protection for victims and witnesses, medical care for the injured, and safeguards against double-counting overlapping incidents.

It also urges the competent authorities and humanitarian teams to survey roads and areas reportedly contaminated with mines in Dhubab and Bab al-Mandab, install urgent warning signs, facilitate clearance operations and risk education concerning unexploded ordnance, and protect civilian roads and humanitarian supplies from uses that endanger the population.

SAM warns that any extensive or prolonged closure of the roads connecting Taiz city with its southern and western countryside would affect more than freedom of movement. Its effects could rapidly extend to prices, the availability of food, medicine, fuel, and water, and families' access to medical treatment and markets. At present, no data are available to estimate a specific percentage increase in prices should these routes close. However, past and present indicators show that Taiz is extremely vulnerable to any new supply shock.

Human Rights Watch documented that the closure of major roads around Taiz since 2015 forced civilians and goods onto lengthy and dangerous mountain routes. The journey between Taiz city and Al-Hawban, which once took approximately 10 to 15 minutes,

stretched to between six and eight hours, while some journeys that had taken one hour came to take as long as eight hours. The organization noted that these restrictions directly obstructed the transport of food, medicine, essential goods, and humanitarian assistance.

The experience of water access demonstrates even more directly how movement restrictions and higher transport costs translate into a financial burden on families. In its 2023 report on the right to water in Taiz, Human Rights Watch found that transporting approximately 2,000 liters of water by tanker cost around US$25 in Taiz, compared with about US$10–15 in Aden. Residents linked the higher cost to inflation, fuel prices, and road closures. This illustrates that the disruption of corridors affects not only food supplies but can also increase the cost of essential services on which people depend every day.

This risk is especially significant in the current economic circumstances. The World Bank reported that the cost of the minimum food basket in government-controlled areas had risen by 26% by June 2025 compared with the previous year, before subsequently declining as the exchange rate improved and the government introduced measures. The Bank stressed that continued price reductions depended, among other factors, on the absence of new supply restrictions. It also noted that poor roads and high transport and logistics costs in Yemen directly affect food prices, particularly in rural areas.

The prospect of disruptions to Taiz's roads comes at a time when the population already faces high levels of food insecurity. According to the latest analysis published by the World Food Programme in June 2026, approximately five million people, or 47% of the population in government-controlled areas, faced Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity, including 1.4 million at Emergency level. The proportion was expected to rise to 51% during the lean season from June to September 2026. The analysis identified high food and fuel

prices, low income, and declining assistance among the main factors limiting households' ability to meet basic needs.

Data specific to Taiz reveal further vulnerability. In the 2025 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis, parts of the governorate were among areas recording high proportions of households with poor food consumption, while pockets of severe hunger were identified in Al-Mawasit District. The same analysis noted that densely populated governorates, including Taiz, account for a large share of the population classified in the Emergency phase of food insecurity.

On the basis of these indicators, SAM considers that the potential renewed isolation of Taiz could create an interconnected chain of economic and humanitarian consequences: longer transport distances and increased fuel consumption and costs, followed by higher costs of bringing in food, water, and medicines, which would be reflected in retail prices at a time when household purchasing power is declining. If closures continue, supplies to markets and health facilities could be affected, forcing families to reduce the quantity and quality of food they consume, postpone medical treatment, borrow money, or sell assets to meet basic needs.

The consequences of any siege or prolonged disruption of existing access routes would therefore begin not when goods disappear from markets, but from the moment journeys become longer, more dangerous, and more expensive. In a city that has already endured years of movement restrictions, and in a setting where a large share of the population faces acute food insecurity, any new shock to supply routes could be a multiplier of the crisis rather than merely a geographical extension of military operations.

Effects of Shelling on the City Outside the Villages Covered

On October 7, the Yemeni News Agency, Saba, citing a medical source, reported that five civilians were injured by shrapnel when shelling struck the Al-Shamasi and Al-Thawra areas of Taiz city. This incident is included as an indication that risks extend into urban population centers, and its injuries are not added to incidents covered by field monitoring in rural areas without an independent review to prevent double-counting.

Legal Characterization: Civilian Protection, Siege, and Individual Criminal Responsibility

The incidents addressed in this report are governed by international humanitarian law applicable to non-international armed conflicts, notably Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocol II of 1977, to which Yemen acceded on April 17, 1990, and customary international humanitarian law. Article 13 of Additional Protocol II provides for the general protection of the civilian population against the dangers arising from military operations and prohibits attacks on civilians or acts or threats of violence whose primary purpose is to spread terror among the civilian population. The fundamental guarantees relating to the rights to life, liberty, and security of person and the protection of private life and the home also remain applicable under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Yemen acceded in 1987.

Accordingly, shelling affecting populated villages, killings inside homes, raids, detentions, and property destruction require an independent assessment of each incident in accordance with the rules of distinction, proportionality, and precautions. Homes and villages do not lose their civilian character merely because an owner or resident belongs

to the armed forces; loss of protection depends on whether the object is being used, in the circumstances prevailing at the time of attack, in a manner that makes it a military objective. Article 8(2)(e)(i) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court also defines intentionally directing attacks against civilians in a non-international armed conflict as a war crime, while destruction or seizure of property not justified by military necessity remains subject to accountability when the elements of the offense are met. Searches of homes and phones and restrictions on information are also subject to the safeguards protecting privacy and freedom of expression under Articles 17 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the need for a legitimate legal basis, protection against arbitrariness, and respect for necessity and proportionality.

The risk of siege or renewed isolation of Taiz also has independent legal significance. A siege is not prohibited as such in all circumstances, but becomes unlawful when used to starve civilians or deliberately deprive them of supplies essential to their survival, or when humanitarian assistance is obstructed in violation of the law. Article 14 of Additional Protocol II prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the destruction or rendering useless of objects indispensable to their survival. Article 18 provides for humanitarian and impartial relief actions when civilians suffer undue hardship owing to a lack of supplies essential for their survival, such as foodstuffs and medical supplies. Customary international humanitarian law likewise prohibits starvation and requires that humanitarian relief be allowed and facilitated. Accordingly, the closure or obstruction of roads into Taiz, when accompanied by an intention to deprive civilians of food or medicine, or when it deliberately and unlawfully brings about such deprivation, may give rise to responsibility for using siege or starvation as a method of warfare.

The rules of individual criminal responsibility are also relevant. Article 25 of the Rome Statute establishes responsibility for those who commit crimes, order or instigate their commission, or assist in their commission. Article 28 provides for the responsibility of commanders and superiors where forces under their effective control commit crimes and they knew, or should have known, about them yet failed to take the necessary measures to prevent or repress them or refer the matter for investigation and prosecution.

Although Yemen is not a State Party to the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court has not to date acquired general territorial jurisdiction over crimes committed on Yemeni territory, the Statute remains an important reference for identifying the elements of war crimes and individual responsibility, alongside customary international law, national law, and any other competent judicial mechanisms. The Office of the Prosecutor of the Court has previously confirmed that the Court does not have general territorial jurisdiction over the situation in Yemen absent a referral by the Security Council or a special acceptance of jurisdiction, although personal jurisdiction may arise in specific cases involving nationals of States Parties.

The documented incidents should therefore be examined not only as separate events but also in terms of repeated conduct, the identities of the units involved, chains of command, commanders' knowledge of violations, and whether measures were taken to prevent or investigate them. Establishing a pattern of unlawful attacks on civilians, deliberate killings, punitive destruction of property, or the use of deprivation of essential needs as a means of military pressure could move the matter beyond individual violations to broader criminal responsibility for perpetrators, those who issued orders, and commanders exercising effective control over their forces.

SAM's Demands

SAM for Rights and Liberties calls on the Houthi group to immediately cease attacks directed against civilians and civilian objects and to comply strictly with the rules of distinction, proportionality, and precautions at every stage of the planning and execution of military operations, so as to minimize harm to the civilian population to the greatest extent possible.

The organization also calls for independent, effective, and transparent investigations into the killing of Khalil Mohammed Saif inside his home; the killing of Hamoud Abdullah Saif Al-Rajhi; and the attacks that caused civilian deaths and injuries in Thabat, Al-Aqroud, Al-Mawasit, Jabal Dhahih, Jabal Habashi, Al-Hanjar, and other areas. It calls for the identification of individual responsibility for any established violations and for accountability and an end to impunity.

SAM demands the immediate disclosure of the fate and whereabouts of Mohammed Abdulsalam Nasser Ali, Mohammed Ahmed Abduh, Hazza Abdullah Naji, and any others deprived of their liberty during recent operations, guarantees for their physical and psychological safety, and their ability to communicate with their families and access fundamental legal safeguards.

It also calls for an end to any destruction, confiscation, or looting of homes and civilian property not justified by legitimate military necessity, for the property of military personnel, their relatives, or others not to be used as a means of punishment or retaliation, and for the protection afforded to civilian objects under international humanitarian law to be respected.

SAM calls on all parties to the conflict to preserve the roads and corridors on which civilians depend, avoid disrupting them unless required by a temporary and specific military necessity, refrain from using food, medicine, or population movement as a means of pressure, and ensure safe passage for patients, ambulances, and humanitarian aid without unlawful obstruction.

The organization also calls on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant UN mechanisms concerned with Yemen to strengthen monitoring and documentation in southern and western rural Taiz, investigate patterns of harm to civilians and civilian objects, and follow up on any restrictions affecting roads or movement that could isolate the city or undermine residents' access to basic necessities. Monitoring priorities should include the effects of communications restrictions, confiscation of internet devices, and potential impediments to accessing medical treatment and relief.

SAM demands an end to arbitrary raids or searches of homes and mobile phones, disclosure of the legal grounds for detention and confiscation, and arrangements enabling families to learn the fate of detainees and communicate with them. It also calls for guarantees against the use of threats of punishment or collective responsibility against relatives of military personnel or local residents.

It further urges the authorities controlling telecommunications services to transparently explain the causes of reported outages, refrain from imposing unlawful restrictions on internet access or confiscating communication devices without a legal basis and effective safeguards, and ensure the communication channels essential to residents, witnesses, and humanitarian teams.

The organization calls on humanitarian actors and the relevant authorities to respond to the needs of displaced persons from Al-Shamayatayn, Al-Ma'afir, Jabal Habashi, and other Taiz districts, ensure the safety of routes used to transport patients, displaced persons, and supplies, and provide safe and impartial humanitarian access.

SAM emphasizes that southern and western rural Taiz are not merely geographical areas in which clashes take place. They are civilian communities and an essential lifeline connecting the city to its surroundings and enabling daily life to continue. Protecting the people of these areas, their homes, roads, and livelihoods is therefore part of protecting all residents of Taiz from military operations being used to recreate isolation, disrupt civilian movement, and undermine access to food, medical treatment, and essential services.



Southern and Western Rural Taiz: Escalating Violations Against Civilians and Civilian Objects Threaten the City's Lifeline

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