

# FRAGILE TRUCE

Report Addressing the Challenges of the Truce in Yemen and  
Reasons for its Inability to Lift the Siege on Taiz



**SAM**  
Rights & Liberties

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## How We Are

An independent, non-profit human rights organization located in Geneva, started its activities in January 2016

It obtained a work permit in December 2017. It seeks to defend human rights in the Middle East and Yemen in particular, and to communicate human rights violations to decision-making institutions, and effective and influential international organizations. It has been subjected to many campaigns of distortion and incitement, as well as hacking of its platforms by the parties to the Yemeni war due to Expose them for the crimes they committed. It issued dozens of reports in Arabic and English and human rights statements documenting violations of the war and human rights in Yemen

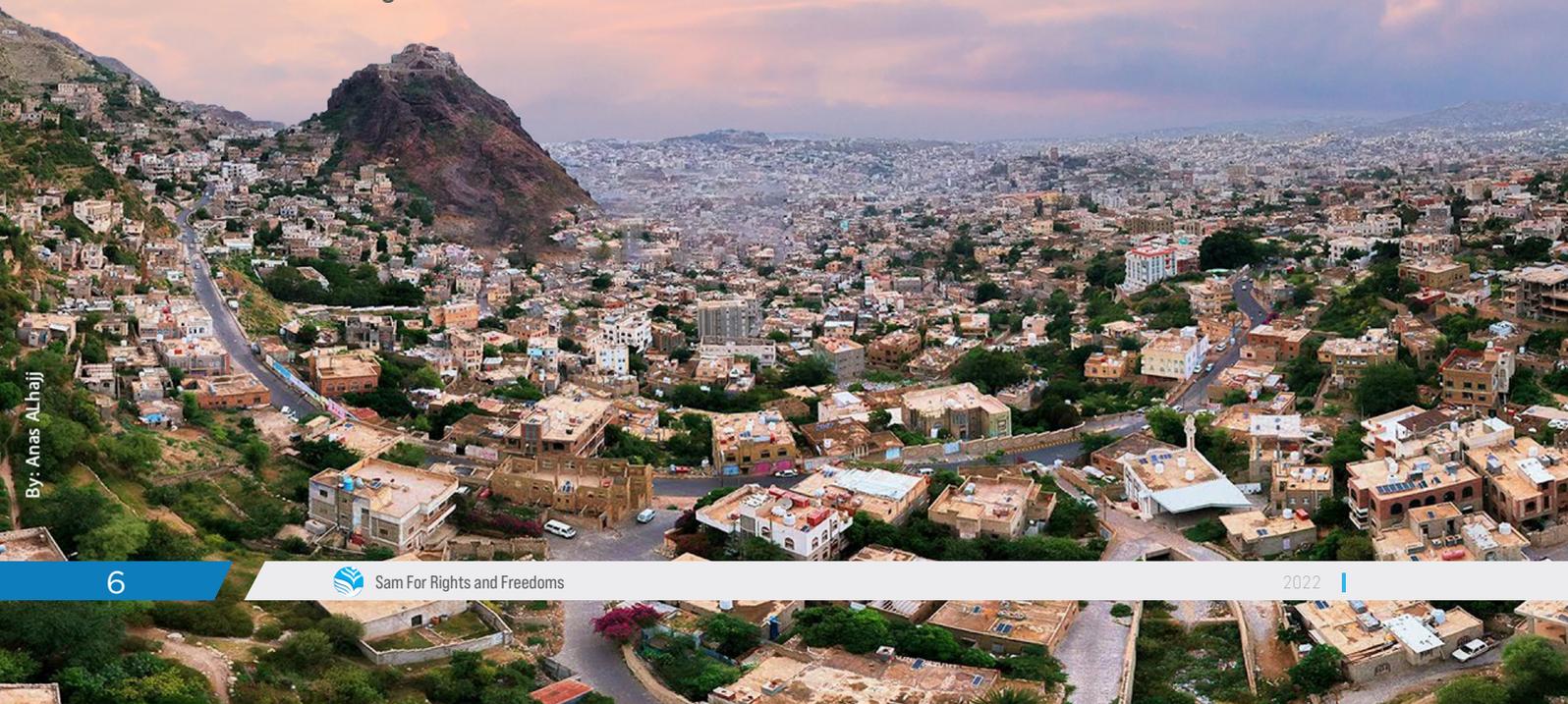
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Yemen has witnessed a conflict between several internal and external political parties, which has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands and the displacement of millions of Yemenis since 2014 while nearly 80% of Yemen's population of 29 million has become dependent on aid, in the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.

As the conflict continues, many Yemeni regions are still subjected to violations and restrictions, including the city of Taiz, which is witnessing a siege imposed by the Houthi group on the city. Moreover, the numbers and incidents monitored by the international organization team showed that civilians were directly affected by its consequences, especially the sick, the elderly, children and women, as the siege turned the city of Taiz into a large prison where collective punishment is practiced against all those who live in it without distinction between civilians or military. It also affected the freedom of movement between villages and cities and directly targeted the right to life of civilians whether by sniping, mines, or indiscriminate bombing.

All these incidents and others prompted the United Nations to sponsor a truce or agreement between the Houthi group and the military coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to give civilians a space of time without being killed or abused by the various parties to the conflict, in addition to trying to create opportunities between the parties to the conflict to find a peaceful solution that guarantees the protection of civilians.

The organization stated in its mini report that it had hoped all political parties and states involved in the Yemeni conflict would bear sufficient responsibility to spare Yemenis the scourge of the conflict running for years especially in light of the continuing violations of the parties, in particular, the Houthi group, which is violating the rights of civilians, especially those living in Taiz, by shelling and sniping operations and the use of unjustified force despite the signed truce.



By: Anas Alhajj

“SAM” indicated that the first truce signed between the parties entered into force on April 2, 2022 and held to a large extent while the United Nations sought to extend it, especially with its expiration at the end of June whereas dozens of violations and abuses were recorded before the UN envoy announced its renewal for an additional two months. Then it was renewed for the third time.

Despite its support for the UN truce and the protection of civilians, “SAM” is concerned about its fragility, especially as the UN truce in Yemen is heading towards a dead end in light of the failure of its basic provisions announced last April, specifically the lifting of the siege on the city of Taiz. The organization attributed the matter to the continued violations of the Houthi group, which is still showing its military might in its areas of control, noting that there is exploitation of the chaos and instability in several areas to impede the parties to reach a comprehensive political solution to the war in Yemen.

“SAM” monitored in its report more than 90 violations in Taiz governorate during the UN truce that began last April, noting that the Houthi group is responsible for those violations, which included the use of heavy weapons, indiscriminate shelling,

the imposition of siege and sniping operations which have been going on for several months. It also stressed that the Houthi group, by signing the UN truce and its actual and field disavowal, aimed to achieve its interests by continuing its violations in parallel with its statements that it applies the terms of the truce without any obstacles.

“SAM” concluded its report by emphasizing the importance of the international community’s protection of the truce through the formation of a monitoring committee supervised by neutral countries as a first step in preparation for a final solution that guarantees an end to the ongoing conflict and ensures the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Yemeni people for a democratic rule, in addition to providing them with basic rights guaranteed by international law.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

First, it must be noted that the UN truce must be sponsored by the international community through specific and documented guarantees and mechanisms to ensure its implementation and to bring violators to legal accountability, especially since the violations of the parties to the conflict - foremost of which is the Houthi group - constitute serious crimes due to their violation of the rules and covenants of international law.

Since the war broke out in Yemen, the rate of killings, indiscriminate bombing and targeting of civilians, in addition to the crime of enforced disappearance, has increased significantly. These are crimes that all parties to the conflict in Yemen share. These parties are accused of carrying out many practices that violate the rules of international law, starting with the extrajudicial killing of civilians and bombing operations, passing through the crimes of enforced disappearance and psychological and physical torture against detainees and abductees, and not ending with the siege imposed by the Houthi group on the city of Taiz and its dangerous and unacceptable effects.

International covenants affirm that extrajudicial killings and the use of unjustified force in attacking civilians are war crimes and crimes against humanity in accordance with the Rome Statute that formed the International Criminal Court, in addition to its violation of the Hague rules and the Geneva Conventions, especially the fourth, which recognizes the full and special protection of civilians during armed conflicts.

“SAM” stresses that international humanitarian law and relevant international conventions oblige the forces and members of the Houthi group in particular and the parties to the conflict in general, to respect the legal rules that guarantee protection for civilians, especially the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which collectively emphasized the protection of the rights of civilians and the criminalization of every attack, behaviour or practice that would target or pose a threat to civilians in their places of residence and gatherings.



According to the estimates of the Transportation Bureau, the siege has caused the movement of people to increase fourfold, it was before the war. Calculating the movement of approximately 100 people per day, and due to the high transportation fees between the governorate's district or between the governorate and other governorates, the citizens in Taiz spent approximately 70 billion Yemeni riyals of their own money and lost approximately 500,000 hours spent on detours to reach their destination.

## EXAMPLES

"Hajj Said Ali Qassem", 80 years old, said: "I have to travel from Taiz to Sana'a continuously for the purpose of medical treatment with a famous doctor as I am a liver patient and receive my treatment for the fifth year in a row. I keep thinking a lot about traveling and the hardships of the road and the traffic jams that we find on the road because I get tired a lot in a way that increases my illness and makes me suffer more than my "liver" disease. I can't stand the distance from Taiz to Sana'a. I also travel early in the morning so that the road is not crowded and I am not late on the road and with this I arrive in Sana'a in the evening. With the beginning of my travel, every time I feel exhausted and tired because of the suffering that I will face in traveling on the dirt, mountainous roads and my body hurts so badly unbearably. Since before the war, I could not bear the fatigue of the road, even though the road was shorter than now, so how will I be after all these obstacles?"

He added, "When I arrive in Sana'a, I feel sick and sit in my house for several days until I recover from the fatigue and hardship of the road, and so on each time, as I have to go to Sana'a because there are no doctors due to their displacement from Taiz to other governorates."

Shawqi Al-Yousifi, a journalist, the al-Aqroudh road which separates Al-Hawban from the city is one of the most heinous war crimes!

The 5-minute drive from Al-Hawban to the city took five hours, and according to a large number of travellers, they need in many times up to 8 hours or more to reach the area, especially if an accident occurred or a vehicle broke down. I never thought the road was that bad. It has turned into a living hell! We wrote a lot about the long distance, but going through the experience revealed to me very miserable and disgusting details. I realized as I crossed the distance in one of the narrow corridors that the opponents of Taiz are multiplying and that its siege does not only have a stranglehold over people, but also turns them into tools of struggle.



\* The rugged and slippery road.. Most of the time the tankers – Dyna and big trucks - have to stop due to the severity of the situation. As for the narrowness of the streets in the area - Halq al-Deek - in particular, it is unbelievable. Hardly one car passes a long road. If another car appears in front of it, the owners of the vehicles have several options: Either someone goes back a distance that is difficult to imagine, or they devise a solution at the same moment and accept to pass with the occurrence of an adhesion that causes damage to cars, or to stop the movement until the solution comes from other parties, not to mention the crowded trucks, so large vehicles are repeatedly stuck together to the point that dismantling them takes a long time.



\* No one passes these roads without cursing everyone who caused such a hell for more than four million people. Then they just simply transformed the province into a media material that is apparently intended for good, and inwardly the harshest conspiracies are plotted against it. It has become clear that each party seeks to demonize the other through Taiz as if this province is destined to become a long-term playing card, regardless of the extent of the suffering experienced by the citizen in Taiz.



\* Suffice it to say in short that the victims of the al-Aqroud road are more miserable than the victims of the fronts. The pain is similar here and there, with the difference that whoever crosses the distance between Taiz and al-Hawban in this way feels so sad whenever they remember that they could have arrived in a matter of minutes.



\* The file of opening the safe corridors should not be closed because what is happening in the al-Aqroud road and Halq al-Deek are crimes that amount to war crimes if not worse.

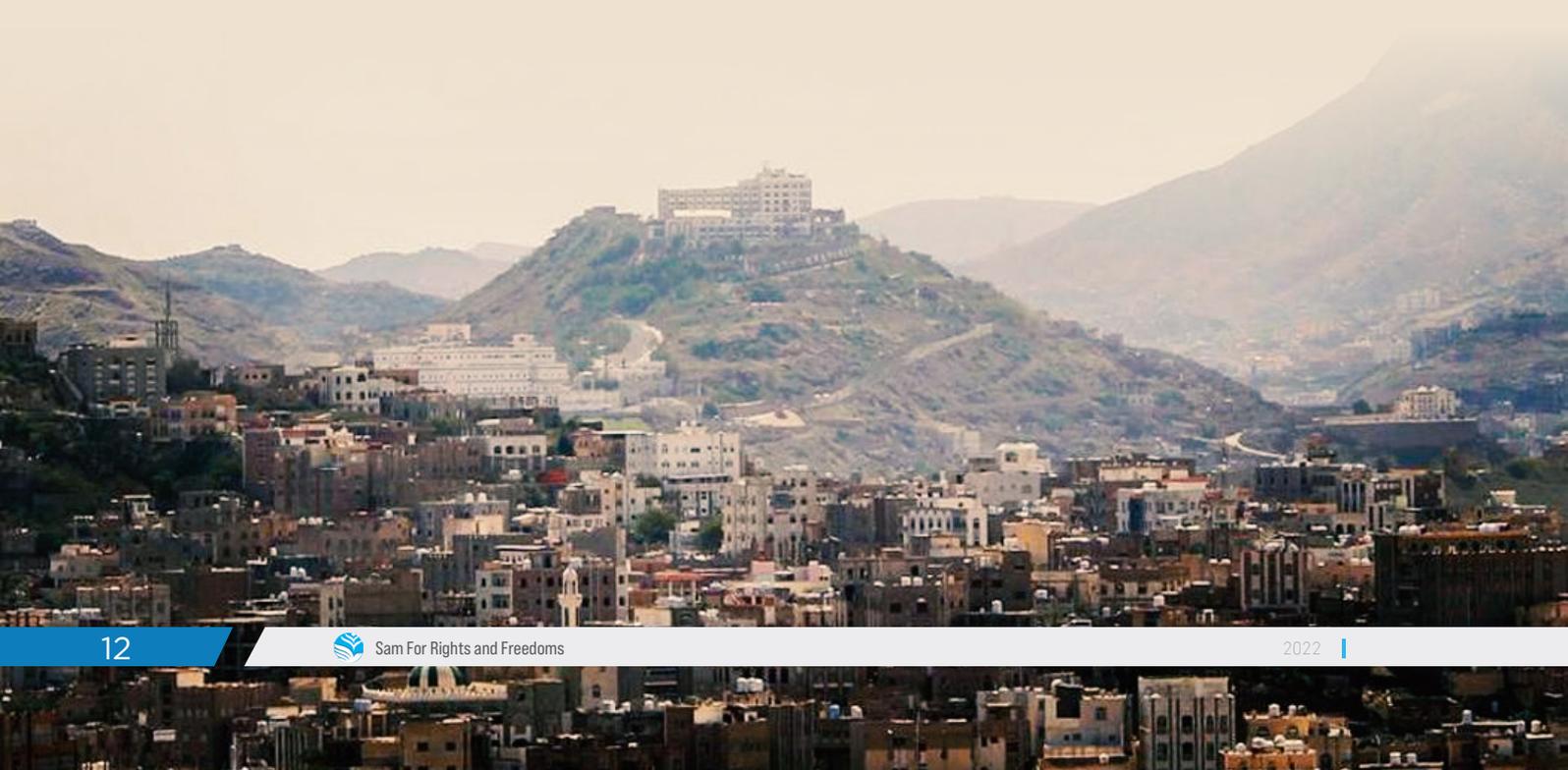
### Why Al Hawban Road

Al-Hawban road connects Taiz with the rest of the northern and southern governorates alike in record time where Taiz is separated from Aden through Al-Hawban only two and a half hours instead of 10 hours in the twisting dirt roads and the distance to Sana'a is shortened to 4 hours instead of 10.

Today, after the Houthi closure of the main roads leading to the northeast towards the Al-Hawban area, as well as the roads leading to the north and northwest that connect the city of Taiz with the rest of Yemen. Before 2015, the journey from Taiz to the Al-Hawban area used to take about 10 or 15 minutes, but it now takes 6 to 8 hours. To leave the city of Taiz, residents are forced to take the unpaved mountain road of Al-Aqroud, which is a detour around the city of more than 60 kilometres in length. Al-Aqroud road is winding and narrow with many sharp turns and many government and Houthi checkpoints.

Michael Page, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement: "Houthi restrictions have forced civilians to use dangerous and poorly maintained mountain roads that are the only connection between Taiz city's besieged population and the rest of the world. Opening the main roads would help immensely to alleviate the suffering of a population that has been in near-total isolation for seven years."

In addition, the siege caused many workers working in Hayel Saeed factories located in the Hawban area to lose their jobs or forced them to move their families to the al-Hawban area on an arduous journey that led to the breakup of the family.





## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

International law guarantees civilians the freedom of movement and the accessibility for their commercial and basic goods even in times of war, and this is what is stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Hague rules and the four Geneva Conventions. However, the Houthi group still denies this set of rights and deprives citizens in Taiz of access to goods and their basic needs and imposes severe restrictions on the entry and exit of goods. The commercial movement in Taiz has been affected by the siege imposed on the city, and it has caused a significant increase in prices that exceeded the purchasing power of civilians.

In order to approximate the image, we will mention an example of the scale of the wage for transporting a ton of goods, which costs about 45,000 Yemeni riyals currently towards the city through Hayjat Al-Abd. If the goods are transported through the Kurba al-Suha road, which is the alternative road to Hayjat al-Abd, the transportation price will rise to 70,000 Yemeni riyals per ton, while the transportation price will not exceed 15,000 Yemeni riyals if the main roads are opened.

As for the prices of national goods from Al -Hawban, the lease of the ton has increased to about 20,000 Yemeni riyals while it would not exceed 4000 Yemeni riyals if the main roads were open to transport the goods, in addition to the damage and rot these goods are exposed to due to the rugged mountain roads and the length of the road that lasts for several days or the vagaries of weather such as accidents, torrents, etc., since goods such as cheese, frozen chicken, fish and milk are exposed to damage due to these factors.

It should be indicated here that there are many reasons for the high prices, as transportation through these lines bear 10 to 15 % for the goods packed in cartons and approximately 5 % of the basic materials “wheat, flour and sugar” packed in bags. The percentage of the increase is from the value of commodities and not an increase in the cost of transportation, knowing that the high increase and costs of transportation from the port of Aden are incurred by the citizens of Taiz, whether in the city or in Al -Hawban, as well as the damage that the commercial sector bears regarding the damage of its facilities and property or the suspension of its business which is reflected, of course, on the citizen. The continuation of the siege and the prolonged war led to the formation of this inevitable result of the increase in prices and heavy economic and commercial losses that included several regions and sectors.

## Another Example



A female citizen says to the “SAM” team in her testimony, “Here in the center of Taiz, the citizen suffers from the instability of the food commodity prices. Every day the price differs from its predecessor. Prices are on a continuous rise until the goods have become worthless.” She adds, “The process of buying and selling in foreign currency is traded, so goods are priced in the Saudi currency. As a result of the instability of the exchange rate, the prices increase per day to more than one price. For example, the price of flour in the morning is different from its price in the evening. Unfortunately, if the exchange rate rises, the prices rise, but if the exchange rate is low, the prices of commodities will not decrease. The current price of the flour is about 55,000 thousand Yemeni riyals, or about \$50, which is considered a large amount for the citizen in Taiz who suffers from the siege and the instability of security conditions.”

She added, “The instability of commodity prices and exchange rates made the citizen’s income here much lower than their needs. Everything here is very expensive. Even the rents are unimaginable. For example, the rent for my apartment which contains two rooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen is 95,000 thousand Yemeni riyals. The bills of electricity and water are very high. Furthermore, domestic gas is almost non-existent. We find it with difficulty and at high prices as the gas cylinder on the black market is sold for 20 thousand Yemeni riyals. The situation in Taiz has become unstable in all respects. “

# THE TRUCE HAS LEFT TAIZ OUT OF ITS ACCOUNT

Since the announcement of the Stockholm Agreement in September 2018, Taiz has been one of the basic items in the agreement, where the third item of the agreement stipulated, “A statement of understanding on Taiz.” Since that time, Taiz has been forgotten and left for its worsening humanitarian suffering. In April 2022, the UN envoy “Hans Grundberg” announced a truce between the parties to the war in Yemen, stipulating that “as soon as the truce enters into force, the special envoy will invite the parties to a meeting to agree to open roads in Taiz and other provinces to facilitate the movement of civilians.” Thus, two delegations representing the legitimate government and the Houthi group held direct negotiations in the Jordanian capital under the auspices of the UN envoy “Hans Grundberg” in order to implement the lifting of the siege on Taiz, but the two parties did not reach a result. The delegation of the legitimate government holds the Houthi group responsible for the failure to reach understandings about lifting the siege on Taiz.

The human rights activist, Dalia Mohamed, says: “Any talk about a truce in Taiz means more massacres, shelling, sniping and terror because we have become familiar with the Houthis and know them well through our experience with them in the previous truces during the past years. The same applies to the last truce that started in April 2022, which the Houthi group began from midnight to announce by bombing of al-Gharbiah area in the Al-Dhabab and eastern neighbourhoods as well, in addition to the civilian casualties as a result of the bombing and sniping of the houses and the targeting of civilians, especially women and children.”

The activist continued saying, “Last May witnessed the most prominent crime by the Houthis who targeted a house in the village of Al -Sailah. The attack resulted in killing a child and injuring the father and mother who got varying fractures. Then the Eid massacre in the Al -Rawda area where a number of children were killed. To this day, the violations are continuing, the last of which was the attack that killed 10 soldiers and injured many others while repelling the Houthi attack, which aimed to close the only city artery. From September 31 to this day, indiscriminate shelling and targeting the al-Dhabab line, which is the only city artery, is still ongoing.”

# THE FRAGILE TRUCE ... CONTINUED VIOLATIONS

The Houthi group's violations against civilians in the city of Taiz continued. The organization monitored more than 90 violations during the international truce which started last April. As a result, 15 civilians were killed and 69 others were wounded. According to the numbers of the Taiz Axis, which was sent to the SAM Organization, the number of violations is 4370, the number of wounded is 149, and the number of martyrs is 37. The violations included multiple violations such as launching attacks, flying, drones, sniping civilians etc. As for the locations targeted, they included Army sites, neighbourhoods and residential villages, especially the al-Dhabab and the southwestern entrance of the city. The organization indicated that the Houthi group is responsible for most of those violations that included the use of heavy weapons, indiscriminate shelling, the imposition of the siege and sniping operations that have been going on for several months. It also emphasized that the Houthi group, through its signing of the international truce agreement and its actual and field damage, aimed at achieving its interests by continuing its violations in parallel with its statements that it applies the conditions of the truce without any obstacles.



Mrs. Fatima Ibrahim says in her testimony to the "SAM" team on August 21, "My son Jihad went out to tend sheep in the afternoon like every day and was supposed to come back at sunset. While sitting next to the sheep, he was shot by the Houthi snipers stationed at the al-Qarn Hill. The bullet hit his right hand and he got also injured by separate shrapnel." She added, "I was at home when he was shot."

Then I heard the screams of the children who said that the sniper killed my son Jihad, and I went out quickly to try to see and rescue him. However, the Houthi snipers directed their weapons fire on us. After several attempts, we were able to take him to hospital with difficulty, and he was transferred on a motorcycle to Al -Thawra Hospital and then to Al -Safwa Hospital. Thank God, my son improved.”

Fatima concluded her testimony by saying, “The Houthi sniper does not have mercy on the people of the village or even sheep and cows. They snip us and target women, children and old people on daily basis. They do not distinguish between one and the other. We do not know where that truce they are talking about but we see how people are killed in front of our eyes.”

The neighbourhood sheikh Faisal Ahmed, 50 years old, said in his testimony to “SAM” team, “A mortar shell fired by the Houthi group fell next to the house of (Hashem Muhammad Ali) in the village of Al -Sailah in Al -Dhabab area where several fragments of that shell fled while they were next to the house before sunset and they resulted in the killing of the child (Mahmoud Hashem) with shrapnel that hit him in the chest and left thigh. That shell also resulted in the injury of (Hashem Ali) with shrapnel in the chest and the right hand, as well as his wife, Souad.

He added, “I was sitting at home when I heard the sound of a strong explosion very close to my house. I went out to the location of the explosion and found several wounded. We transferred them to the al-Thawra General Hospital in Taiz when the villagers gathered after the explosion occurred.” He concluded his speech by saying, “Is this the international truce? What is the guilt of these innocent people? What is their fault to be killed this way in their houses by the Houthi militias except that they were safe civilians?”

As for “Walid Abdul -Bari”, 41 years old, he said in his testimony, “We were sitting at home inside the room, me, my children and my wife, when we heard the sound of a very strong explosion in the house. Then it became clear to us that a mortar shell fell inside the house and caused an opening in the ceiling of the hall and the bathroom. The mortar shell was fired by the Houthi militias stationed in Al-Rabie Hadhran. Thank God, there are no injuries except material damage to the house.”

He added, “The strong explosion sound caused the children to be in a state of intense terror. As for the truce, we do not see it applied on the ground. We in the village of Al -Sayahi, the al-Dhabab area every day, suffer from the shells that target our houses and agricultural fields and the shelling doesn’t stop. As for the truce, we do not know about it except what we hear in news channels.”

## MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS

The parties committed to the truce exchange accusations about violations by the other party. The Taiz Axis Media Center published on its page more than one report where the Yemeni government accuses the Houthi group of not adhering to the truce, which is supposed to contribute to reopening the roads leading to the besieged city of Taiz, stressing that the group repudiates its obligations. Abdul Baset Al-Barh, the official spokesperson for the Taiz Axis, told SAM Organization, "As, we did not feel as military

officers or civilians in Taiz that there was a truce at all. All the hostilities of the Houthi/Iranian militias are continuing and have even escalated on some fronts and at times.

The bloodshed is still the same, as you notice the dead, the wounded, the prisoners and the kidnapped.. and most of them are civilians, children and women. The unjust, crippling siege, the closure of all crossings and entrances, and the prevention of freedom of mobility or movement of citizens, goods and humanitarian aid to and from the city of Taiz remains



the same.. Rather, the only partial entrance and the lifeline of civilians in southwestern Taiz (Al-Dhabab) witnessed violent and continuous offensive operations with various weapons, more than ever before, by the Houthi militia with the aim of closing it down and controlling it, even by fire in order to enforce the suffocating siege on every entrance no matter what it was. This is evidence of the aggressiveness of this group and their avoidance of peace except as media and political manoeuvres and to take advantage of the truce militarily in order to arrange its conditions to wage war again.

The conviction of many military men and civilians that the truce is a gift to the militias and nothing more. The citizen did not benefit from it, nor did it lead to the easing of tension, or it at least stopped the escalation of hostilities and combat. Even those who are under the grip of the militias did not benefit from the truce, neither in terms of paying salaries nor in the provision of oil derivatives. The black market remained open despite the entry of ships. Even when it comes to passports and travel, it is not for the ordinary citizens but rather for certain groups and other purposes. Moreover, mobilization and recruitment continued, even for children, in addition to military

parades with weapons, including strategy, combat elements, human forces and various types of forces in Hodeidah, in front of the UN Monitoring Mission.

What is new in the truce last time is the arrival of experts for aviation maintenance and overflights in addition to threatening citizens with them, developing marches and setting up workshops for that... This is the most dangerous thing as can be imagined! What is left for the truce of benefit or consideration, and where is this truce that we hear and find no effect on the reality of life or in the field? On the other hand, Yemeni Foreign Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak said in a press conference in Amman: His Aden-based government supports any move to extend the UN-brokered truce that has been extended for another two months as long as it leads to a lasting peace agreement.

For its part, the Houthi group accused the Yemeni army and the Saudi-led coalition to support legitimacy of violating the humanitarian and military truce in Yemen. It said in a statement on August 16 that government forces and the Coalition Forces to Support Legitimacy committed 172 violations of the truce during the past 24 hours.

## DIVISION OF THE CITY AND SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

The Fourth Geneva Convention states that separation of family members should be avoided, as far as possible, in the context of the transfer or evacuation of civilians by the occupying power. The commentary on Rule 131 regarding the treatment of displaced persons includes a practice that requires respect for family unity in general, without limiting it to displacement.

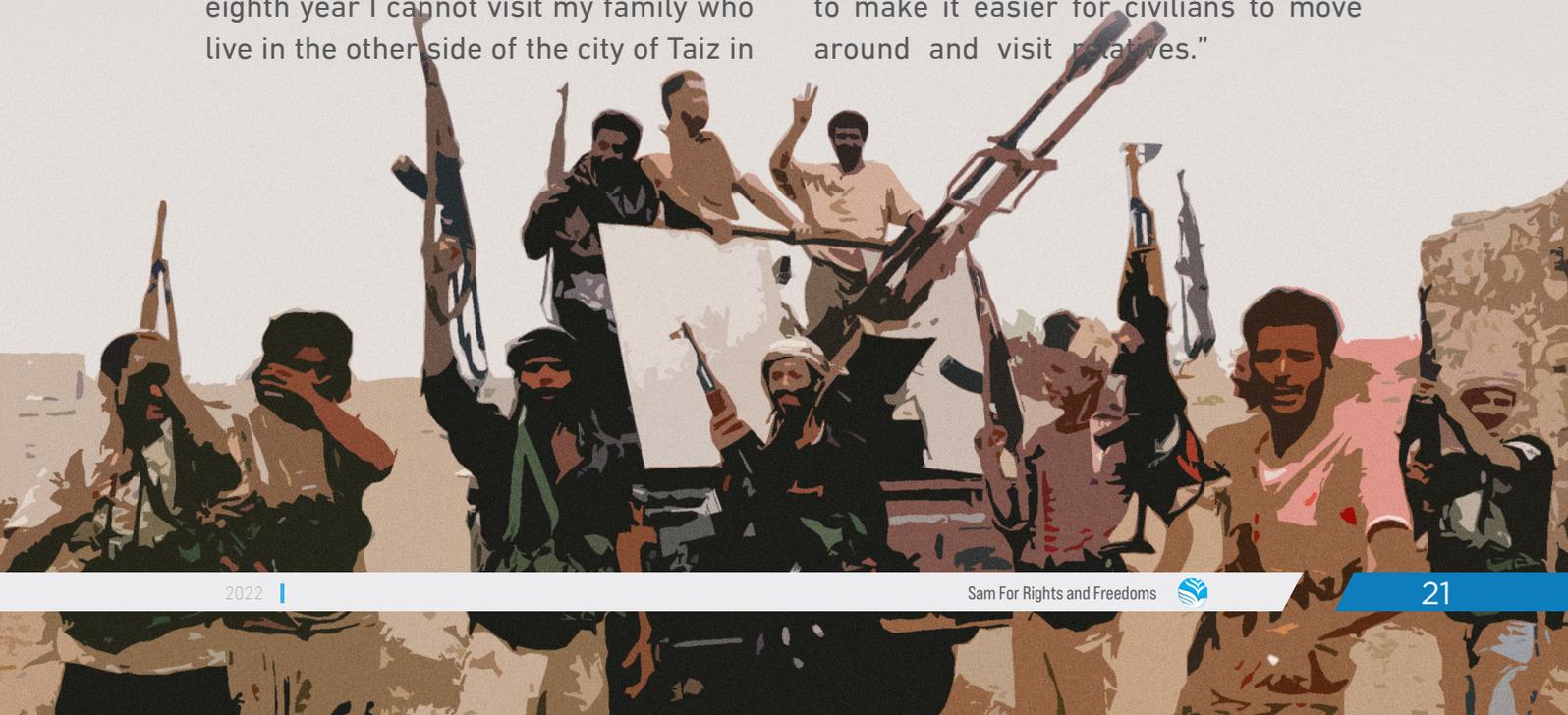
In addition, there is an important practice relating to the duty to facilitate the reunification of separated families. Additional Protocols I and II also establish the duty of parties to a conflict to facilitate the reunification of families separated by armed conflict.

Families separated between the Houthi group's areas of control and the legitimate government's areas of control hoped for a reunification. For his part, "Mohammed Al-Faqih", 38 years old, said in an interview with the "SAM" team, "I was displaced from Al-Hawban at the beginning of the war in 2015, and for the eighth year I cannot visit my family who live in the other side of the city of Taiz in

Al-Hawban as a result of the suffocating siege imposed by the armed Houthi group on civilians in the city of Taiz." "We were very optimistic about the truce, and I was very happy when I thought that the roads and crossings that separate us from Al-Hawban for only a few minutes would be opened, but this agreement has not been implemented," he added.

He pointed out in his speech, "Although the truce entered into force, unfortunately, it is still difficult for me to visit my family. The only means of communication now is limited to phone only even though this entrance is close to the place where I live. If I want to visit my family on the other side of Taiz, I will need to travel 8 hours when the actual road takes 5 minutes only due to the checkpoints and siege of the Houthi group."

He concluded his speech by saying, "I call on the United Nations and the special envoy for Yemen to pressure the Houthi group in order to implement the agreement and open the main roads to make it easier for civilians to move around and visit relatives."



## MARATHON NEGOTIATIONS

On May 27, 2022, the head of the negotiating team for the legitimate government, AbdulKarim Shaiban, issued a statement saying: "After two days of arduous discussions in the morning and evening with the Houthis and the attempts to convince them by all logical and objective means, they never responded. All that the Houthis suggested was an old Himyarite mountain pass that was intended for the passage of donkeys and camels, and a car could not pass through it due to its narrowness, ruggedness and length. This crossing is 30 km away from the city. It starts from the Al-Zaylai area, then passes through

the village of Abaar and the village of Al-Sarmin, and reaches the foot of Sabr Mountain in the Salh area. This crossing does not alleviate the suffering of the people, even by 10 percent, and unfortunately, the head of the Houthi delegation considered it a gift from them to the people of the city of Taiz." He blamed the Houthi group for the failure of the negotiations as he said, "Therefore, there is apparent intransigence, procrastination, lack of seriousness, and lack of response to alleviate the suffering of 5 million people from Taiz Governorate. Should they not respond to the opening of the known official roads and lines that



connect Taiz with the rest of the governorates this Friday evening, we will have to stop discussing and talks. We will also announce this to local and international public opinion and inform them about the reality of the Houthis' intransigence and their failure to respond to local, regional and international demands to lift the siege, open roads, and lift restrictions on those trapped inside Taiz governorate.

"The European Union called on the parties, especially the Houthis, to continue to engage constructively with the United Nations Special Envoy Grundberg and his proposals regarding the reopening of roads, especially around Taiz."

The US special envoy Lenderking, in a televised interview, called on the Houthi group to lift the 8-year-siege on Taiz city. He emphasized that his country is seeking to reach a permanent armistice in Yemen that leads to a political solution to the crisis, stressing the importance of implementing the terms of the UN truce and expanding its benefits. He also pointed out that the truce is still fragile.

In return for these timid efforts, the Houthi group responded by flexing its military muscle in the cities of Sana'a and Hodeidah. On September

16, the Houthi group displayed a large military parade in Sana'a, which it called the Day of the Young Revolution and included what they claimed messages that confirm to the coalition of aggression and its international sponsors that the chances of penetrating Yemen diminish as each day of the days of aggression and blockade passes. President Al-Mashat pointed out that the security services, with their various formations, have today become a strong fence to serve the people, preserve their rights and protect them from crime and the plans and conspiracies of aggression. The Houthi military official negotiating the opening of roads between the governorates of the Houthi group, Yahya Abdullah Al-Razami, affirmed his refusal to open the Al-Hawban road for what he called "precautionary measures and arrangements to ensure that no party blows up the military situation again in this sensitive area." On 29 August 2022, 16 human rights organizations issued a statement calling on the Houthi forces to open vital roads in Taiz, the third largest city in Yemen, and to restore freedom of movement for all civilians in order to prevent further deterioration of the already serious humanitarian crisis in Taiz.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE TRUCE

The truce signed - for a period of two months- between the Houthis and the Saudi-led military coalition, entered into force on the second of April and has largely held. On the other hand, the United Nations sought to extend it, especially with its expiration at the end of June while dozens of violations and abuses were recorded before the UN envoy announced its renewal for an additional two months, after which it was renewed for the third time.

The fragile Yemeni truce, which was extended for the third time on August 2 for two months, is in a state of stagnation and faltering in one of its basic files since the implication of terms of the truce was stopped at reopening the roads in Taiz. This is the term that should be applied by the Houthi group, which has been imposing a siege on the city for more than six years.

The implementation of the terms of the truce continues to falter even though the Yemeni parties agreed to extend it based on the commitment to implement these terms, in addition to negotiating a new expanded truce.

The human rights organization documented several unjustified violations by several military parties. The Houthi group ranked first as it targeted residential neighbourhoods and civilian gatherings with artillery and missile shelling, in addition to arbitrary detention, kidnappings outside the law, and sniping operations, stressing that these operations targeted unarmed civilians, including women and children.

## TRUCE REQUIREMENTS

Ateq Jarallah, President of Mocha for Strategic Studies, says to “SAM” about the truce requirements, “I think that looking at the Yemeni situation from the angle of addressing the humanitarian impacts of the war in Yemen will not stop the cycle of war and will not build peace in Yemen. These are merely temporary relief areas. The truce itself, if it continues, is only a postponement of conflicts, but it does not build long lasting peace. Therefore, I think it is important for the international community to take a serious action regarding the Yemeni situation in order to address the causes of the war and to sponsor a serious dialogue that preserves for everyone a space of representation and attendance. That solution begins with guaranteeing freedom of opinion, stopping human rights violations, and reducing international interventions to end them.

He adds, “But if we talk about the truce and the relief work as an emergency, the following conditions should be taken into consideration: Punishing the violator decisively and immediately so that the violations do not expand, handling urgent cases according to a fixed schedule that includes justice and avoidance of selectivity, involving Yemeni civil society and human rights institutions, the media, celebrities

and influencers to support the truce and support humanitarian and development initiatives in critical areas of conflict, and making real achievements in the file of releasing prisoners of conscience. We should not stop too much at the truce unless progress is made in the economic file, freedoms, human rights and political dialogue at the same time, even if it is at lower levels.

professor of Political Sociology Abdul-Baqi Shamsan, says: “I think that the siege of Taiz is part of a strategic framework, whether for the coalition or the Houthis, for geopolitical reasons. This city has a demographic weight, with a population of 5 million. This massive density is mostly considered a public carrier of the outcomes of the dialogue and the unified state and supportive of the legitimate authority. Its liberation will lead to a change in plans and strategies in Yemeni geography.” He adds, “The city has a geographical, social and national extension with the southern governorates. Also, Taizi citizens are spread across all Yemeni demographics, and they are highly skilled and thus work in administrative, technical, educational and medical institutions. Therefore, we will find that the two countries of the coalition stopped at the 1990 line when the southern areas were liberated from Houthis

and Saleh. This cessation explains why the city was not liberated although this is possible. The academic thinks that, “The planting of internal groups in the city, such as the Abu al-Abbas group, which was originally established to confront the so-called political Islam groups, such as the Islah Party and also to be an Emirati arm in the depth of Taiz and coalition, contributed to the siege of the city by not liberating it despite the presence of a military force capable of liberating the city whenever it is extended with military support, but this support has been stopped for political reasons, in addition to the establishment of the so-called the Republic Forces in the coastal areas to secure navigation and surround it in case a faction not loyal to them took control of these areas. Therefore, the coalition is partially responsible for the siege for not liberating the city even though it has become very stressful. Thus, we limit the demands of the citizen to life matters, taking into consideration that emptying of the southern governorates from the people of Taiz has increased the citizens’ daily suffering.”

On the other hand, Shamsan says, “As for the Houthi siege, it comes in the context of the governorate’s rejection of the Imamate “Houthi” project based on the divine mandate, so the governorate poses a threat to them. The Houthis know very well that the coalition did not want to

liberate the city, so they tightened the siege to nullify the demographic weight. In addition, the international community and the countries that dominate international decision-making were complicit because they wanted to keep the Houthi in order to establish a balance and to rearrange them within the framework of the Middle East project, similar to what happened in Iraq. These countries did not talk about lifting the siege, but only about reopening corridors, which means that the Houthi group will remain on the outskirts of Taiz so that it will be able to reimpose the siege again at any time. This contradicts the three references, especially Resolution 2216. Thus, it is a truce so that each party maintains its strength and presence in geography in preparation for a consensual solution that does not provide real peace, but rather achieves peace in light of a weak state and incoherent sovereignty while the society remains hostage to regional states for long periods. The clear solution is based on the three references and the end of the coup in Sana’a and Aden.”

Journalist Yahya Abdulraqib Al-Jubaihi, “The truth is that the Arab coalition and others have deliberately continued the siege of Taiz, ignoring the provision of necessities to it, and deliberately humiliating it. They are helped by the many concessions made by the legitimacy because of its approval of the first and second

truce without the approval of the Houthis although the Houthis alone benefited from the same terms they did not arrogantly agree to them. Even if the approval of “legitimacy” is driven by humanitarian aspect in the first place, which is interpreted by the Houthi and Iran as weakness and acceptance of dictates at the expense of the siege of Taiz. Personally, I do not rule out a Gulf-Iranian consensus and American pressure to implement the requirements of the Houthis and not to pay attention to the siege of Taiz because the siege of Taiz does not only mean the liberation of Taiz, but also means the liberation of the rest of the provinces since Taiz is the role model and capable of sparking the popular revolution and liberation from the monarchy and dictatorship. The most important thing is that Taiz will be the city able to build, reconstruct and move towards more cultural and economic development. These factors are not desired by the coalition countries that want to get Yemen out of the war while it is in a state of dependence for a long time. The security and military authority in Taiz also take part of the responsibility for the siege that Taiz suffers from morally and ethically. Had the force been truly found, dozens of Taizi people would have made improvised marches to the Al-Hawban area, which is only 5 km away from the city’s streets. I had personally suggested that we

go on a march and I would be at the front of it, even if I am killed in order to break the siege. Lifting the siege must have a price, with the military preparation and clearing the road of mines. I found a violent response from the military leaders because of this suggestion while there was a positive reaction from the civilians. Some military and security leaders are unwilling to open the siege for their own reasons. I believe that the truce based on mutual humanitarian grounds on both sides was formulated and announced by the envoy and accepted by the legitimate government and the Houthi accepted only what concerned him. I think it is difficult to implement the truce on the ground as long as the UN envoys execute the desires of the Houthis. Therefore, what is implemented on the ground is what the legitimacy has accepted despite its insignificance. The legitimate government must be liberated from the pressures that push it to make concessions, in addition to replacing some leaders of the local authority in Taiz governorate, arming the legitimate army and popular resistance, and providing the most necessary requirements. This is the guarantee to implement all the terms of the truce on the ground unless civil society does the task of educating citizens about the importance of lifting the siege, and sacrifices must be made for that.

# DEMANDS

## “SAM” confirms that

- The international community should deal seriously with the truce in Yemen by forming an oversight committee supervised by neutral countries as a first step in preparation for a final solution that guarantees ending the ongoing conflict, achieving the aspirations of the Yemeni people for a democratic rule, in addition to providing them with the basic rights guaranteed by international law.
- **Lifting the siege imposed on Taiz and obliging the Houthi group to cease all its attacks against civilians**
- All military and political parties, foremost of which is the Houthi group along with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, are required to put aside any differences and pay attention to the suffering of Yemeni civilians that has been going on for more than ten years, noting that the economic, political and human rights situation in the country has reached its lowest levels internationally and all parties are obligated to come up with a solution that guarantees the protection of civilians and their rights.
- The international community should immediately intervene and provide full protection to civilians and compel all parties to the conflict to end their repeated violations against civilians and form a fact-finding committee into the repercussions of repeated violations by all parties.



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