

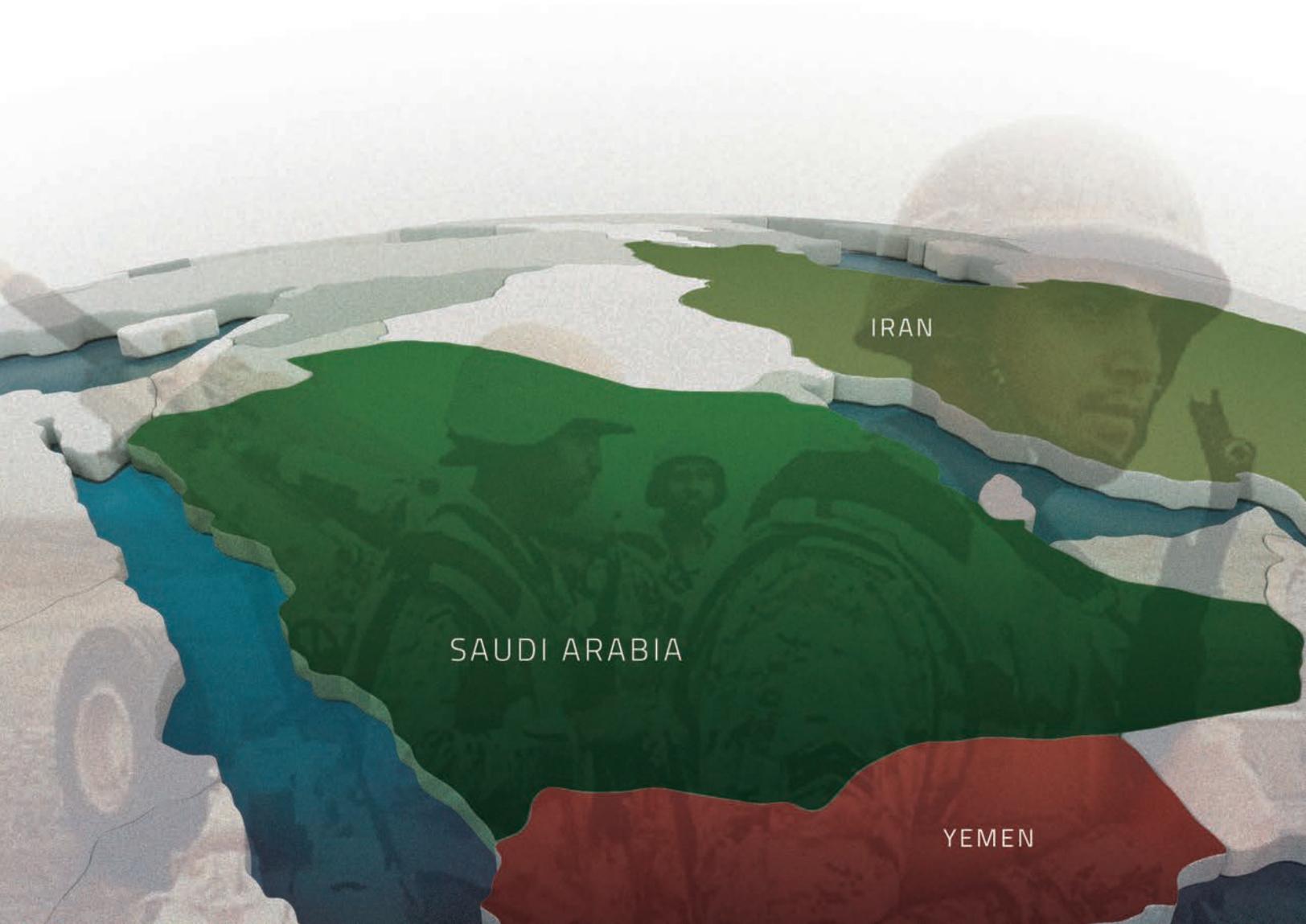


SAUDI ARABIA

and

THE YEMEN CONFLICT

APRIL 2017 REPORT





“Yemen is where the real proxy war is going on, and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East.”

IRANIAN OFFICIAL TO REUTERS, MARCH 22, 2017

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President Hadi stated that Yemen would have fallen in four days and would have been an Iranian state had it not been for the Operation Decisive Storm launched by the Arab military coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

01

Executive Summary

Yemen has experienced political turmoil and a climate of lawlessness for decades. In recent years, however, Iran's covert support for a Yemeni faction exacerbated existing divisions and triggered a political and economic crisis that led to the violent ouster of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi in 2015. As Yemen found itself on the brink of civil war, an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the United States intervened. Its objectives were to protect the civilian population from attacks by Iranian-supported Houthi militias, restore the legitimate government and prevent Yemen from becoming a safe haven for Al-Qaeda and a base for Iranian adventurism and subversion in the region.

Saudi Arabia and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) began an intense diplomatic effort aimed at avoiding civil war in Yemen when nationwide protests began in February 2011. Saudi Arabia helped to broker the departure of Yemen's longtime leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the formation of a National Unity government. It also promoted a United Nations-led National Dialogue among all political factions and free elections in 2012 in which Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected president. This period of optimism was cut short by repeated attempts by the Houthis to sabotage the nation-building process, at first by political obstruction, and then by military means.

The root causes of the conflict in Yemen are complex. The al Houthi family and the political-rebel movement whose adherents collectively refer to themselves by "the Houthis" have waged a decade-long campaign to achieve political power by military force. This campaign of aggression has aggravated longstanding divisions and produced attacks on both fellow Yemenis and Saudi civilians across the border. Their insurgency against Yemen's central government has been aided by the financial and operational support of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Lebanon's Hezbollah militia.

In 2014, a prominent Iranian government official boasted that Iran now controls four Arab capitals, with Sana'a joining Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus.

Iran's interference in Yemen is of a piece with its activities in Lebanon, Iraq, and elsewhere, and Iranian involvement has escalated in Yemen as the conflict wore on. Indeed, upon the capture of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a by the Houthis in 2014, a prominent Iranian government official boasted that Iran now controls four Arab capitals, with Sana'a joining Beirut, Baghdad and Damascus.¹ Iran has

smuggled weapons into Yemen, in violation of an arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council, that have been used to attack Saudi, U.S. and Emirati ships off the Yemeni coast and civilians in Saudi Arabia. Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Qods Force—the external arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—met top IRGC officials in Tehran in February 2017 to evaluate plans that would further advantage the Houthis in Yemen. A senior Iranian official told Reuters, “Yemen is where the real proxy war is going on, and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East.”²

As President Hadi sought to draft a constitution that could represent the interests of all Yemenis and capitalize on the achievements of a political transition endorsed by the United Nations, former president Saleh found common cause with Iran and its Houthi allies, who sought to unilaterally redraw Yemen's internal boundaries in their favor. The Houthis resisted repeated diplomatic efforts by multilateral organizations to find a political solution. As violence escalated, the international community expressed grave concern at the prospect of a coup d'état by an Iranian-backed extremist militia that had already violently occupied several cities, seized government posts, and bombed the Presidential Palace.

1 Middle East Monitor, “Sana'a is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution,” September 27, 2014

2 Reuters, “Exclusive: Iran steps up support for Houthis in Yemen's war,” March 22, 2017

It was successive Houthi military offensives throughout 2014 and 2015 that finally provoked the Hadi government to request the intervention of what was to become the Saudi-led coalition. Military action was based upon the principle of self-defense contained in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Preventing Houthi control of Yemen and protecting Yemen's neighbors from the Houthis' arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment was essential to the national security of Saudi Arabia and other GCC nations.

As part of the effort to restore the legitimate government of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and its Coalition partners have also degraded the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh (ISIS) to use Yemeni territory as a safe haven. AQAP terrorists have exploited the security vacuum that followed the Houthi assault on Sana'a in September 2014, and expanded their presence in the countryside, specifically Yemen's southern and eastern regions. In April 2015, AQAP fighters attacked and occupied the strategic port city of Mukalla, which was subsequently liberated by Yemeni armed forces, in collaboration with Saudi and Emirati special forces. Today, AQAP does not control a single city in Yemen. In November 2014, Daesh established a foothold in Yemen and began to directly target Coalition forces in Yemen in response to the Kingdom's coordinated efforts to degrade the terror group's operational bases in Syria.

Saudi Arabia remains committed to a peaceful, diplomatic and multilateral solution to the crisis in Yemen. Saudi Arabia supports the UN-led efforts to achieve a political solution in Yemen based upon UNSC Resolution 2216, the GCC initiative, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue. Although military intervention in Yemen was necessary to prevent Yemen's collapse, the solution to the country's conflict will be political: the formation of a new national unity government, with power shared among the parties. Such a unity government would respect the sanctity of international borders, ensure Yemen's territorial integrity, and prohibit the deployment of weapons from Yemeni territory that threaten international waterways or the security of Yemen's neighbors.

A stable, prosperous and self-governing Yemen free of foreign influence and transnational terrorist organizations is within reach. As the single-largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, the Kingdom has committed to play a substantial role in future reconstruction efforts.



Left unchecked, the Houthi militias, backed by Iran, would have taken control of Yemen—along with its military arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment—and turned those weapons on its neighbors.

02

Overview of Saudi-led Coalition Achievements in Yemen

Following are the achievements in the campaign against Iran-backed Houthi separatists as well as against the terrorist organizations in Yemen:

Improved Containment of Iranian Influence on the Arabian Peninsula

After the fall of the legitimate Yemeni government at the beginning of 2015 because of the Houthi offensive, Iran sought to provide the Houthis with political and financial support. The Houthis subsequently became the single largest militia force in the country, and were particularly strong in north and central Yemen. The Houthis were then able to direct significant violence at Saudi targets: In July 2015, Houthi military units shelled Saudi military sites in Jizan Province. Between May 2015 and January 27, 2017, the Kingdom intercepted more than 40 missiles launched at Saudi territory from Yemen³, nine of these missiles have struck Saudi territory. A convoy of Iranian ships headed to the Gulf of Aden in March 2016 carrying weapons to that group's militia was intercepted by U.S. naval vessels responding to Saudi Arabia's request. Saudi intervention has stalled Iranian ambitions to turn Yemen into a proxy-state and Houthi militias into another Hezbollah.

Substantial Eradication of Houthi-led Separatism

Houthi rebels participated in the Yemeni national dialogue and agreed to its outcomes. The Houthis, however, reneged in their commitments and launched a military offensive occupying the city of Amran in the summer of 2014 and the capital of Sana'a in September 2014. Saudi Arabia's intervention, done as a response to a request by the legitimate government of Yemen, prevented the fall of Aden and supported the legitimate government in regaining control over more than 85 percent of Yemen's territory.

3 The Missile War in Yemen; Missile Defense Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies



Humanitarian aid distributed by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center

Saudi Arabia is the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, having contributed over \$847 million in food, medicine, shelter and other assistance.

Erosion of Religious Extremism

Left unchecked, Yemen's political power struggle and resulting civil war would have left that country more vulnerable to the violent influence of terror groups already inflaming the region.

Reduction of Aggression Against Yemen's Civilian Population

Over the course of the war, Houthis have bombed civilians on the ground, used child soldiers, and withheld humanitarian food assistance as a means of intimidation. In Taiz, where the Houthis used such brutal tactics against civilians, Saudi Arabia dropped food and medicine to relieve the siege against the city.

Resumption of Humanitarian Assistance

Saudi Arabia has been able to extend significant humanitarian support to help ameliorate the suffering of a population that was devastated by internal conflict long before Riyadh's decision to intervene. The Kingdom has been the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, contributing more than \$847 million during the conflict. In April 2015, responding to an appeal by the United Nations, the Kingdom gave \$274 million to support UN efforts in Yemen, and then announced in May that it would supply an additional

\$267 million in assistance. Such aid is not new: Riyadh pledged \$3 billion to help Yemen implement reforms against poverty and hunger in 2012 and donated millions of barrels of crude oil and petroleum products to assist with Yemen's energy needs that year and beyond.

Thwarting the Menace of Al-Qaeda and the Rise of Daesh

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), cited by the U.S. State Department in 2014 as the greatest threat to Saudi internal security, sought to exploit the Yemen civil war for its own objectives, including suicide bombings that targeted Saudi and Western nationals. Daesh has penetrated Yemen, having carried out car bombings, attacks on mosques, and grisly executions that claimed more than 130 lives by the end of December 2015. Terrorist strongholds have subsequently been liberated by Coalition forces.

Diplomatic Efforts

Saudi Arabia, the GCC, G10 countries and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General have worked diplomatically to seek a peaceful transition of government. In 2011, political parties in Yemen agreed to accept the GCC Initiative. However, while Riyadh and President Hadi have sought compromise with Houthi forces—including parliamentary representation and greater autonomy within Yemen's provinces—the Houthis chose to attempt to win territory through military action. Today, diplomatic efforts are mainly UN-led with the political support of Saudi Arabia, the GCC and the international community. The Kingdom and its Coalition partners continue to prevent further destabilization and create a more hospitable climate for negotiations.

Left unchecked, the Houthi militias, backed by Iran, would have taken control of Yemen—along with its military arsenal of ballistic weapons, tanks and other advanced military equipment—and turned those weapons on its neighbors. Saudi Arabia continues to work toward a peaceful solution that maintains the integrity and independence of Yemen. Saudi Arabia is committed to providing the financial support necessary to rebuild Yemen and improve the quality of life for all Yemenis. Without Saudi involvement, Yemen's conflict could have produced unacceptable consequences for regional and international security.

Saudi artillery shelling Houthi targets along the Saudi-Yemeni border.

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03

Strategic Interests in Yemen

The strategic interest of Saudi Arabia in securing stability in Yemen and in maintaining the legitimate, popularly-elected national government of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi is four-fold: securing Saudi Arabia's border, stemming Iran's regional expansionist ambitions, combating terrorist threats and safeguarding regional security.

Many of Saudi Arabia's strategic interests in seeing stability in Yemen are in line with international priorities in the region. In particular, with respect to fighting terrorism, containing Iranian aggression, and promoting regional stability and cooperation, the interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia run parallel.

Combating Iran-backed Houthi violence directed against the Yemeni population and, by extension, against Saudi Arabia is the first strategic priority of the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has endured unprovoked attacks towards its Jizan Province, Houthi ballistic missile attacks against civilians, and attacks against Saudi border security forces. To date, Houthi separatists have attempted more than 40 missile strikes against Saudi Arabia from the Yemen border and coastal territories, with nine such attempts striking Saudi land.

Secondly, Saudi Arabia's interest in quelling this conflict also includes thwarting the geopolitical expansionist ambitions of Iran in Yemen - a sentiment also echoed by the Kingdom's Coalition partners and allies.

Iran, the world's biggest state sponsor of terrorism, has provided Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training as part of an effort to swing Yemen in favor of Iran's regional ambitions. Iran has publicly admitted that they will continue to meddle in Yemen's domestic politics, telling Reuters "Yemen is where

the real proxy war is going on and winning the battle in Yemen will help define the balance of power in the Middle East.”

Iran has backed the Houthi militia, an effort that dates back over a decade. The Houthis have been a proxy for Iran, which is seeking to extend its influence in the region, and Iran has provided the Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training.

It will be necessary to break Iranian influence in order to bring stability to Yemen and restore peace in the region. The burden of keeping Iran in check will have to be shared by a strong Arab coalition backed by the United States, all while continuing to press the attack on terrorist organizations. The United States has committed to standing by Saudi Arabia to accomplish this.

Additionally, the international community has strategic interest in preventing Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), long a highly active terrorist group operating in Yemen, from taking advantage of civil strife and political conflict in Yemen to extend its presence there. AQAP is considered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to be the Al Qaeda affiliate “most likely to attempt transnational attacks against the United States.” To date, that terrorist group has unsuccessfully attempted to target the U.S. at least three times – using concealed explosive devices designed to destroy commercial aircraft or detonate inside parcel packages. The intelligence services of Saudi Arabia helped disrupt two of these plots.

The status of Yemen as a safe haven for transnational terrorist organizations has challenged four consecutive U.S. Presidents. Since the bombing of the USS Cole on Oct 12, 2000, terrorist groups have continued to threaten U.S. interests in Yemen. For example, a September 2008 attack on the U.S. embassy in Sana’a resulted in 18 killed and 16 wounded. In November 2014, AQAP claimed it had attempted to kill U.S. Ambassador Matthew Tueller, but the two bombs were detected minutes before their detonation.

Furthermore, terrorist plots originating in Yemen have threatened the U.S. homeland. Saudi and American intelligence have worked together to foil these terrorist plots. For example, Saudi intelligence was crucial in foiling a 2010 AQAP plot to detonate a bomb lodged in a printer on a cargo plane bound for Chicago. The U.S. State Department and National Counter Terrorism Center has designated the

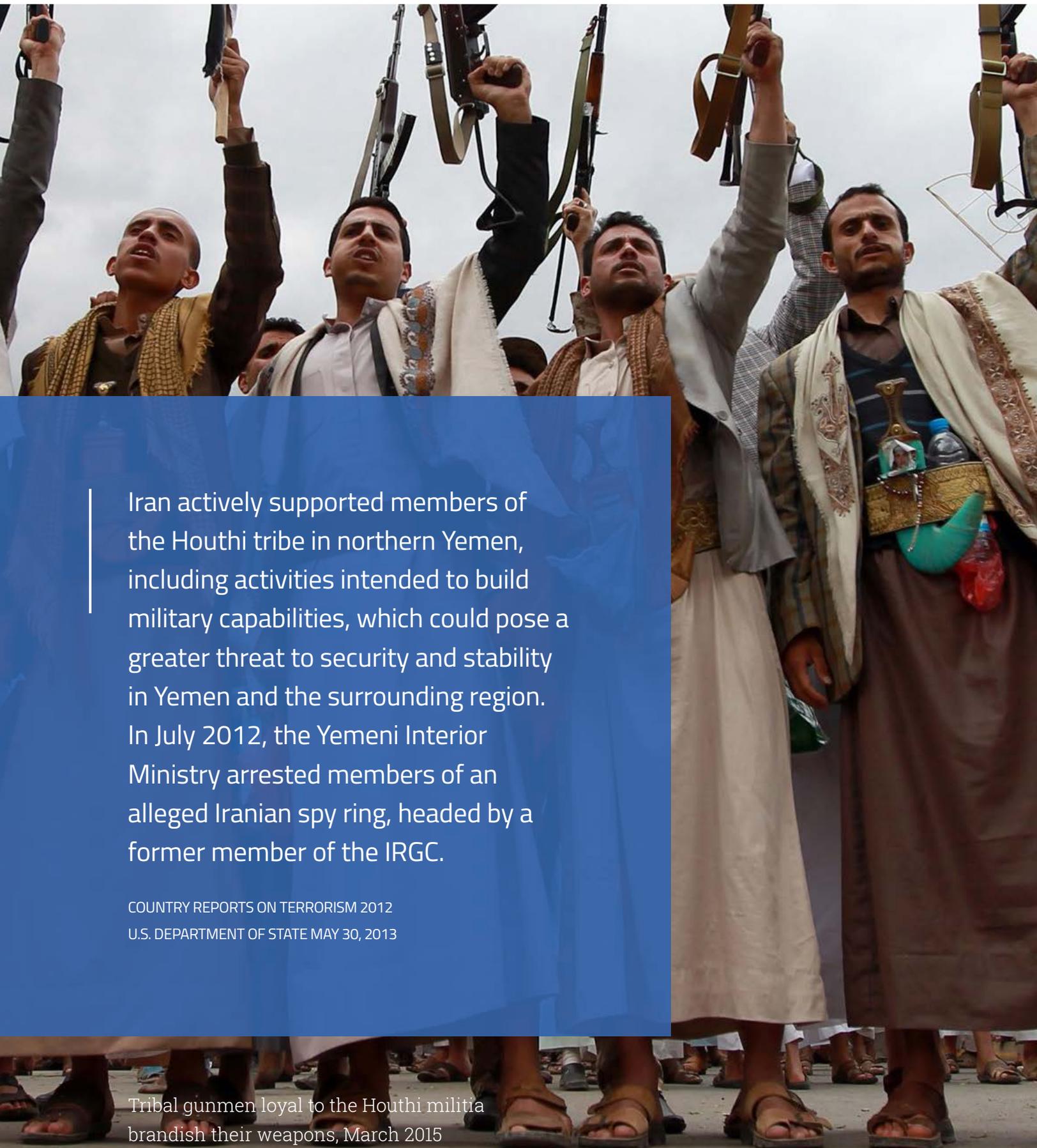
group as the most active of terrorists openly intent on attacking the U.S. homeland. The conflict in Yemen, and all developments that stem from it, are a vital part of the United States' Global War on Terror. Restoration of the legitimate, internationally-recognized government of Yemen would further enhance U.S. counterterrorism objectives in Yemen.

Finally, there is the Kingdom's interest in safeguarding regional security. Yemen is of considerable geopolitical importance. The country, with its 1,184-mile coastline, is strategically located next to the Bab al Mandab strait, through which commercial oil tankers carry an estimated 3.4 million barrels per day (3.5% to 4% of the global oil supply).⁴

United States foreign policy, as articulated by President Donald Trump, places a greater emphasis on U.S. allies taking greater responsibility for their own regional security. Saudi Arabia is in full agreement with this policy. Indeed, Saudi efforts to stabilize Yemen are an effort to assert the Kingdom's role as a guarantor of regional stability. These areas of agreement were further outlined by Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir in remarks to the Munich Security Conference on February 19, 2017: "[President Trump] believes in destroying Daesh; so do we. He believes in containing Iran; so do we. He believes in working with traditional allies; so do we. And when we look at the composition of the Cabinet and the personalities that he appointed: Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Treasury. These are very experienced, highly skilled, highly capable individuals who share that worldview."

With respect to fighting terrorism, containing Iranian aggression, and promoting regional stability and cooperation, the interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia run parallel.

⁴ Congressional Research Service. "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations"; Jeremy M. Sharp; February 11, 2015. For information on the geostrategic position of Yemen, see also: The United States Energy Administration, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints", 2012; available at www.eia.gov



Iran actively supported members of the Houthi tribe in northern Yemen, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region. In July 2012, the Yemeni Interior Ministry arrested members of an alleged Iranian spy ring, headed by a former member of the IRGC.

COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM 2012
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAY 30, 2013

Tribal gunmen loyal to the Houthi militia brandish their weapons, March 2015

04

The Houthis and Iran

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have provided the Houthis with money, training, and sophisticated weaponry for more than a decade, according to the U.S. State Department. The Revolutionary Guard is believed to have transferred rocket and missile capability as well.

"Iran continues to provide arms to the Houthi forces, despite a U.N. Security Council resolution prohibiting such actions," said Senator Bob Corker to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on March 9, 2017. "Houthis have used these weapons to attack U.S. ships off of the Yemeni coast, and they are launching missiles across the border into Saudi Arabia."

Thomas Joscelyn of the Foundation of the Defense of Democracies at the same hearing added, "There is no question that Iran and the Houthis are allies." He continued: "It is in Iran's interest to work with the Houthis against Saudi-backed forces in Yemen, while also encouraging Houthi incursions into the Saudi kingdom". These statements sum up the general U.S. government view of the Iranian relationship with the Houthi forces as well as that of the Gulf and other Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen

The U.S. Government has long recognized Iran as one of the Houthis' two key backers, the other being former President Saleh and his network. In its Country Reports on Terrorism 2012, the State Department noted.⁵



A Houthi sniper trains his sights on Sana'a. Iran has supplied the Houthis with weaponry, financial support and training.

⁵ Country Reports on Terrorism: 2012; U.S. Department of State; May 30, 2013

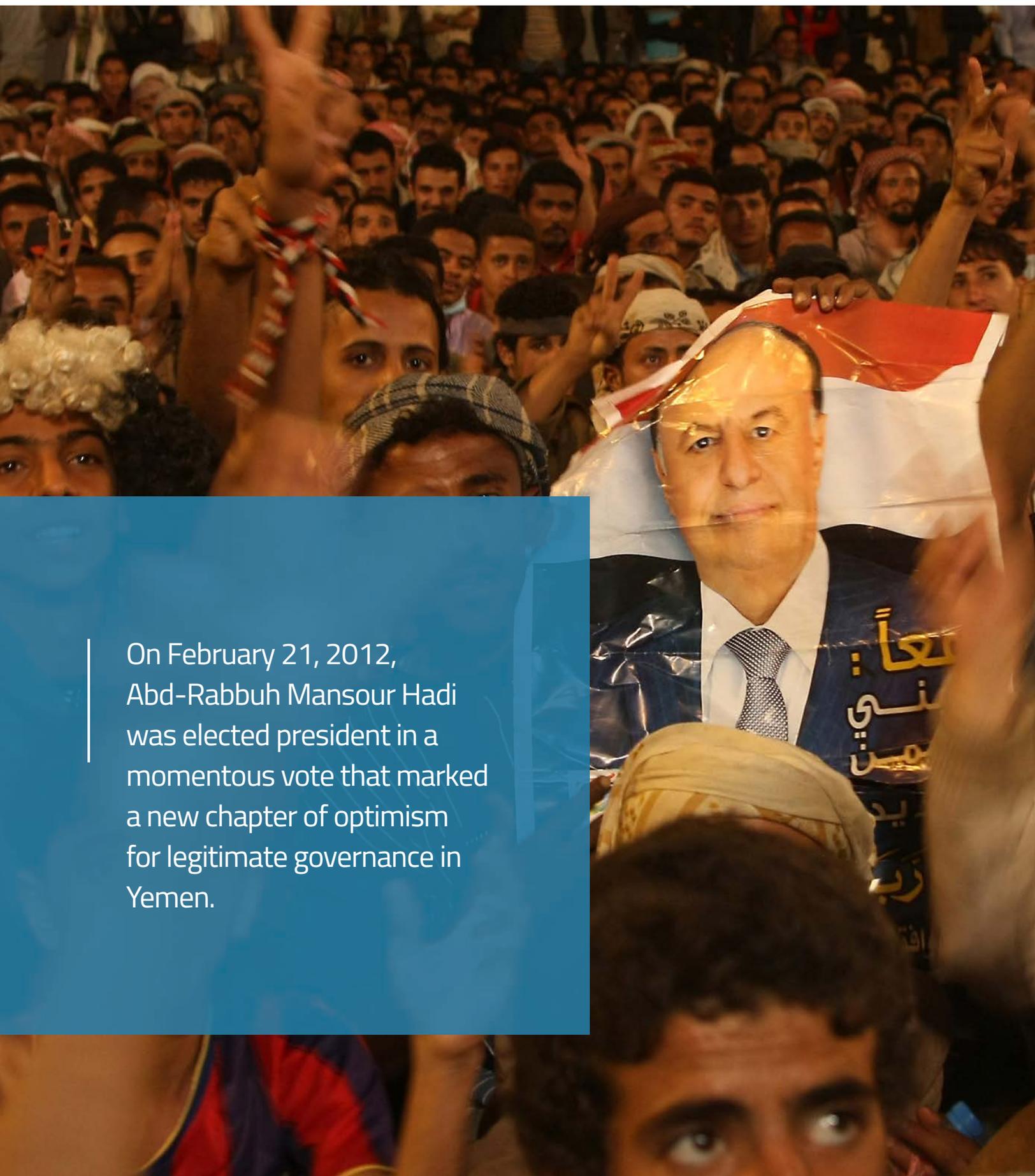
“Iran actively supported members of the Houthi tribe in northern Yemen, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region. In July 2012, the Yemeni Interior Ministry arrested members of an alleged Iranian spy ring, headed by a former member of the IRGC.”



The U.S. and its allies have intercepted multiple shipments from Iran to the Houthis that have included coastal defense systems, according to senior U.S. officials. Tehran has stepped up its assistance since May 2016, sending anti-ship missiles, explosives, and personnel.

Interdiction of vessels smuggling arms to Iranian-backed Houthi militias in Yemen have been ongoing for years.

- **JANUARY 23, 2013:** Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 1, carrying surface-to-air missiles and 16,716 blocks of C4 explosive.
- **MARCH 7, 2013:** Yemeni naval forces seize Jihan 2 in Bab al Mandab strait while unloading weapons onto a Yemeni fishing boat.
- **SEPTEMBER 26, 2015:** Coalition naval forces seize Iranian-registered fishing boat southeast of Salalah, carrying 18 Konkurs anti-armor missiles and 54 BGM-17 anti-tank missiles.
- **FEBRUARY 27, 2016:** Australian frigate HMAS Darwin of the Royal Australian Navy seized a cache of arms from a vessel 313 km off the coast of Oman, including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and mortars.
- **MARCH 20, 2016:** The French frigate FS Provence stopped a vessel off the Yemeni island of Socotra, seizing AK-47s, sniper rifles and anti-tank missiles.
- **MARCH 28, 2016:** USS Sirocco, operating as part of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, intercepted and seized the shipment of weapons hidden aboard a small, stateless vessel. The arms cache included 1,500 AK-47s, 200 RPG launchers and 21 .50-caliber machine guns.
- **OCTOBER 9, 2016:** Iranian-backed Houthi militias fire missiles at the USS Mason, patrolling in the Red Sea.
- **JANUARY 31, 2017:** Houthi suicide boats attack Saudi patrol frigate off coast of Hodeidah, killing two Saudi sailors.



On February 21, 2012, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected president in a momentous vote that marked a new chapter of optimism for legitimate governance in Yemen.

05

A Recent History of Yemen

Yemen has always been a fragile state, one that hostile foreign actors have used as a proxy for their own regional ambitions. Throughout Yemen's history, the United States and Saudi Arabia have partnered with the legitimate government of Yemen to fight transnational terrorist groups and promote regional stability. Hostile actors such as Iran, however, have preyed upon internal political divisions in the country to destabilize Yemen and use it as a base to threaten Saudi territory, as well as disrupt vital commercial shipping lanes.

Meanwhile, transnational terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Daesh have taken advantage of internal divisions in Yemen to carve out a safe haven for terrorist activities. The Al-Qaeda bombing of the USS Cole in October 2000 in Aden harbor was the first of many attacks on Western targets in Yemen in recent years. In September 2004, a Yemeni court sentenced two men to death and four others to prison terms for orchestrating the suicide bombing of the USS Cole.

Continuous Counterinsurgency: 2004-2011

In June 2004, Houthi rebels began a revolt in the northern province of Saa'da. On August 5, 2004, Yemeni officials announced a major offensive to quash this rebellion in these northern mountains. In the six-week conflict that ensued, 500 people were killed—the first large-scale death toll in the conflict.

By 2007, the Yemeni government seized bases belonging to the Houthis in northern Yemen, following fighting that claimed 4,000 lives and drove approximately 2,500 civilians from their homes. On June 16, 2007, representatives of both sides announced a ceasefire in that three-year fight. The ceasefire was broken on January 10, 2008 when Houthis attacked military bases near Jabal

Marran. On September 17, 2008, the U.S. Embassy was attacked with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

In 2009, the conflict began to escalate on the border, with Houthi fighters infiltrating Saudi Arabia. In response, Saudi Arabia launched a large-scale military incursion into northern Yemen in November to address the infiltration of Houthi militias and stop attacks targeting Saudi border areas. By January 2010, this cross-border fighting had claimed the lives of 133 Saudi soldiers.

Peaceful Political Transition: 2011-2014

On February 2, 2011, facing a Tunisia-style “Arab Spring” national uprising, President Saleh announced that he would not seek re-election in 2013, but would serve out the remainder of his term. This decision came after the start of demonstrations that drew people from all interest groups, including Houthis, to protest the poor governance and corruption that had marred Yemeni political institutions under Saleh. Over 16,000 protestors participated in the early demonstrations of January 2011, urging an end to the 33-year presidency of Saleh, who had failed to adequately improve the welfare of Yemen’s people during his rule.

The youth of Yemen played an instrumental role in the protests as leading activists and civil society representatives calling for a prosperous future for all Yemenis. For years, stagnant development and widespread poverty were significant aggravators of unrest in Yemen. After decades of political and economic frustration, opposition groups put forth a proposal to have Saleh peacefully step down from power. Saleh rejected all popular demands for political change, instead resorting to a crackdown on demonstrators that lasted for more than a year. Protests were met with relentless violence by Saleh-backed forces that targeted crowds of civilians and left countless demonstrators wounded.

Finally, the contentious political turmoil in Yemen reached its culmination with a power transfer agreement to remove Saleh from office. By November 2011, the Government of Yemen, alongside allied neighboring states in the Gulf Cooperation Council, introduced the GCC Initiative to prevent the country’s descent into civil war. Despite attempts by Saleh to impede the GCC Initiative and the transitional phase that followed, a national unity government emerged with the unprecedented guarantee of transparent and free elections. On February 21, 2012, Abd-Rabbuh

Mansour Hadi was elected president in a momentous vote that marked a new chapter of optimism for legitimate governance in Yemen.

As part of the GCC Initiative, a National Dialogue Conference, structured by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2051, began in 2013. The details of the accord were worked out by the United Nations, led by Special Envoy Jamal L. Benomar. President Hadi had managed to bring together all the nation's political factions—including the Houthis—in an attempt to reach consensus on governance.

The NDC started its sessions on March 18, 2013, and all parties agreed on a political “road map” following the conclusion of the NDC on January 24, 2014. The NDC called for Aden and Hadramawt to be the south's two new federal regions, with the remaining four federal regions to be in the north. The capital, Sana'a, would have a special status. The next step was drafting the constitution. The Houthis, who had initially agreed to support the outcome of NDC, obstructed its implementation.

Houthi Destabilization: 2014-2015

The promise of progress and stability arising from Yemen's political transition began to erode throughout 2014 and early 2015. When the NDC concluded in January 2014, Yemen's political transition was not yet complete. The National Dialogue worked to modify the government structure and the rights of citizens. Still, a constitution was yet to be drafted, a referendum on its approval had to be held, and subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections were still on hold.

Many international observers were concerned that the momentum in Yemen would shift from the positive gains made by President Hadi to those opposed to the internationally-backed transition process—namely, former president Saleh and his Houthi allies who sought to redraw Yemen's internal boundaries in their favor.



A Saudi soldier patrols the Saudi-Yemeni border. Houthi militias have fired over 55,000 projectiles into Saudi territory.

Within weeks, the Houthi movement, at war with the government on-and-off since 2004, launched another military offensive against various local allies of President Hadi. In February 2014, days after the conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference, the Houthis launched an attack against tribal forces in Amran province. Forces aligned with former President Saleh reportedly joined the Houthis. In May, a brigade of the Yemeni Army with ties to former General Ali Mohsen (who had fought the Houthis in previous rounds of conflict) engaged Houthi fighters in Amran. By July, Houthis had seized the province and city of Amran, killing the leader of the brigade that had been dispatched to stop the Houthis.

Beginning in August, Houthi protestors surrounded the capital, demanding that the government resign and fuel subsidies be reinstated. (Yemen has the highest level of energy subsidies in the region). Government security forces clashed with Houthis encamped around the capital, killing several people. By September, Houthis had taken control of Sana'a, gaining control of principal government buildings and forcing the resignation of the Yemeni prime minister, Mohammed Basindawa.

On September 21, 2014, the United Nations brokered a ceasefire agreement known as the Peace and National Partnership Agreement. Under the terms of the deal, the Houthis and a separatist movement in the southern part of the country were to be granted greater representation in a new government. The deal also called for the reinstatement of fuel subsidies. An annex to the deal, which the Houthis did not sign, called on that group to abide by the ceasefire, disarm their militia, and leave the capital.

On November 7, Yemeni officials announced the formation of a new government consistent with the terms of the Peace and Partnership Agreement. However, the Houthis and the General People's Congress refused to participate in the new government. On the same day, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions under UN Security Council Resolution 2140 (asset freeze and travel ban) on former president Saleh and Houthi leaders Abd al Khaliq al Huthi and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim.

The United States, which had sought the sanctions, announced that "As of fall 2012 Ali Abdullah Saleh had reportedly become one of the primary supporters of the Houthi rebellion. Saleh was behind the attempts to cause chaos throughout Yemen." A day after the formation of the new government and the imposition of



Yemeni protestors in Aden
condemn Houthi ballistic
missile attacks on Saudi Arabia.

OCTOBER 2016

As of fall 2012, Ali Abdullah Saleh had reportedly become one of the primary supporters of the Houthi rebellion. Saleh was behind the attempts to cause chaos throughout Yemen.

U.S. Letter to United Nations Security Council, October 31, 2014

sanctions, the former ruling party headed by ex-president Saleh ousted President Hadi from his role as the party's Secretary General. In addition, AQAP claimed that it tried to assassinate U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Matthew Tueller, but its bombs were detected "minutes before their detonation."⁶

Throughout the winter of 2014, the Houthis continued to circumvent the authority of President Hadi. The group unilaterally appointed regional governors and rejected the appointment of a new army chief of staff. Despite political efforts, the Houthis continued to retain armed militiamen in the capital. Houthi militiamen detained President Hadi's chief of staff, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, one of the primary figures involved in the drafting process of the new constitution.

Houthi aggression continued in early 2015, led by troops loyal to Abdul Malik al Houthi. The Presidential Palace was seized on January 20, 2015 and Houthi militias attacked the private residence of President Hadi in Sana'a. This Houthi leader was praised by Mohsen Rezaei, former senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commander, claiming "Congratulations to you, the heroic resistance of the people and the glorious victory of you the children of Islam."⁷ The Houthis placed President Hadi under house arrest, and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and his cabinet resigned.

6 Agence France Presse, "Qaeda kills 'dozens' in Yemen as government formed," November 8, 2014

7 "Iran's Mohsen Rezaei Writes Open Letter to Yemen's Abdul Malik al Houthi," Tasnim News Agency, March 30, 2015. English translation at <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/irans-mohsen-rezaei-writes-open-letter-to-yemens-abdul-malik-al-houthi>

On February 6, the Houthi movement illegally disbanded Parliament and attempted to establish the appointive Supreme Revolutionary Committee as the highest governing authority. By this time, the Houthi-Saleh coup controlled elements of the Yemeni Army, including its air forces and ballistic missile capabilities. President Hadi fled Sana'a and moved to Aden.

Regional Intervention: 2015-Present

Following the failure among political factions to produce a consensus government in the wake of the coup against Hadi, the Houthis unilaterally announced an extra-constitutional governance plan, while the United States, United Nations, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) called for President Hadi's return to office. On February 10, the U.S. State Department announced that it would suspend embassy operations in Sana'a and was relocating U.S. personnel elsewhere.

In March 2015, the Houthi militias, in an alliance with former president Saleh, continued their offensive and seized Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, including the international airport. They advanced to Aden, where they surrounded the Presidential Palace and threatened to kill or capture President Hadi. On March 8, 2015, Saudi Arabia, in response to a request by President Hadi, invited Yemeni factions to hold a conference under the umbrella of the GCC in Riyadh. The Houthis and their allies declined. Houthi militias bombed the Presidential Palace using seized aircraft from the Yemeni air forces on March 19, 2015.

On March 25, 2015, the Houthis expanded their control over most cities in Yemen, seizing the southern capital, Aden. The Kingdom had by then clearly communicated that any move to capture Aden would trigger military action. The Saudi government then announced that it would intervene in Yemen with a coalition consisting of nine other nations: United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Sudan, Senegal and Kuwait. On March 26, Saudi Arabia, leading the Coalition, launched Operation Decisive Storm.

The Coalition's March 2015 operations in Yemen came in response to an appeal for assistance by the legitimate president of Yemen, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, based upon the principle of self-defense contained in Article 51 of the UN Charter. A coup d'état by an extremist militia supported by Iran had resulted



Operations in Yemen came in response to an appeal for assistance by the legitimate president of Yemen, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, based upon the principle of self-defense in Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

in the occupation of several cities (including Sana'a), the seizure of government posts, and the bombing of the Presidential Palace. The Houthis and forces loyal to former president Saleh occupied major cities in violation of international law, the GCC Initiative, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue, to which the Houthis had given their consent.

Operation Decisive Storm: March 2015

On March 26, 2015, Saudi Arabia deployed its armed forces at the request of President Hadi to help resist Houthi aggression. The Houthis were advancing toward the southern city of Aden, where the Yemeni government was based, in order to remove him from power in another attempted coup.

The 10-country Coalition joined the military campaign in order to protect and defend the legitimate government of Yemen. Saudi Arabia pledged to protect the people of Yemen and its legitimate government from a takeover by the Houthis. Gulf officials also stated that the operation was intended to deter the strategic threat against Gulf states posed by the Houthi advance and Iran's growing strategic designs in the region.

Several Gulf states joined Saudi Arabia in military operations. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar all contributed air support. Non-Gulf states of Jordan, Morocco, and Sudan also showed their support for Operation Decisive Storm. These Coalition members lent their support out of a desire to preserve the legitimate government of Yemen under President Hadi.

Operation Renewal of Hope: April 2015-Present

On April 20, 2015, Saudi spokesman for the Coalition forces, Brigadier General Ahmed Asiri announced that Operation Decisive Storm had ended and would be replaced by a new campaign, Operation Renewal of Hope. The new operation was to mark the start of a more limited military campaign aimed at preventing the rebels from operating. Speaking at a news conference in Riyadh that day, Asiri said that Decisive Storm's

The United States stepped up its efforts to prevent Iranian interference in Yemen and Tehran's supplying of weapons to the Houthis. The U.S. Navy sent the USS Theodore Roosevelt to Yemen on April 20, 2015 to join other American ships prepared to intercept vessels carrying weapons.

heavy airstrikes would be scaled down. Asiri maintained that the goals of the coalition's new phase, Renewal of Hope, are to prevent Houthi rebels from "targeting civilians or changing realities on the ground."

At this time, the U.S. stepped up its efforts to prevent Iranian interference in Yemen and Tehran's supplying of weapons to the Houthis. White House spokesperson Joshua Earnest announced at a press conference on April 20, that Iran was seeking to supply weapons to that rebel group, in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216, which authorized an arms embargo against the Houthis. The U.S. Navy sent the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt to Yemen on April 20, 2015 to intensify security and join other American ships prepared to intercept any Iranian vessels carrying weapons to the Houthis.

In March 2016, Yemeni President Hadi declared that Yemen's national army and popular resistance forces had liberated more than 85 percent of the Yemeni territories from Houthi militia control and from the Houthi-allied forces of the ousted former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

President Hadi also said during those interviews that Yemen would have "fallen in four days" and would have been "an Iranian state" had it not been for the launch of Operation Decisive Storm by the Arab military coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.⁸

8 Saudi Gazette, "Over 85% of Yemen liberated: Hadi," March 3, 2016



Since the liberation of the port city of Mukalla in April 2016, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) does not control cities in Yemen.

06

AQAP and Daesh in Yemen

Both Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh have been able to exploit the political and security vacuum left by the civil war in Yemen to expand their presence and influence in the country. Saudi Arabia and its military allies have undertaken a campaign to combat and dismantle the dangerous terrorist organizations throughout Yemen. While the rise of terrorism in parts of Yemen has been rapid, Saudi Arabia and the legitimate Yemeni government have forced dangerous terrorist cells to retreat from key coastal cities of Mukalla, Aden and others.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

Al-Qaeda has deep roots inside Yemen. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri's men first began to lay the groundwork for Al-Qaeda's organization inside Yemen in the early 1990s. Several different terrorist organizations, including the Army of Aden Abyan and Al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), both considered predecessors of AQAP, have been able to take advantage of decades of political instability in the country to become serious terrorist threats to both Saudi Arabia and Western countries.

AQY and its affiliates made terrorism against Western countries a top priority and successfully carried out several attacks against Western targets, including the bombing of the USS Cole in October 2000 that killed 17 U.S. service members. After the Al-Qaeda-orchestrated attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. became more involved in countering the terrorism in Yemen by deploying special forces on the ground and executing drone strikes targeted at Al-Qaeda leadership. These counterterrorism campaigns were successful in weakening the organizations and diminishing the groups' members, however, several groups were able to exploit the lack of consistent pressure to form AQAP in the late 2000s.

After forming AQAP, the group quickly became one of the world's most-dangerous terrorist organizations. The group was formally designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department in January 2010. Over the past decade, the group has been responsible

for some of the most-notable terrorist attacks in the region and throughout the world. AQAP inspired or orchestrated the January 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, the failed bombing on a Detroit-bound plane in December 2009, and attacks on the U.S., Italian and British embassies in Yemen. In 2009, an AQAP suicide bomber attempted to assassinate Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif, then serving as deputy interior minister, in Jeddah.

Saudi Arabia has been an international force in combatting the rise of terrorism in the Middle East, including AQAP in Yemen. For example, Saudi intelligence was crucial in foiling a 2010 AQAP plot to detonate a bomb lodged in a printer on a Chicago-bound cargo plane. Today, Saudi Arabia, along with the military coalition in Yemen and Western allies, are focused on defeating AQAP and determined to prevent Yemen from being a safe haven for terrorists.

The expansionist goals and tactics of the Houthi militias in Yemen have been a boon for AQAP recruitment efforts. Since the Houthis overthrew President Hadi, AQAP terrorists have expanded their presence in the country, specifically the southern and eastern regions. AQAP was able to take advantage of the security vacuum in the country and establish bases across a large stretch of Yemen's southern coast.

In April 2015, AQAP fighters attacked the port city of Mukalla and were able to seize control of the city's key buildings and infrastructure. AQAP fighters in Mukalla stormed a prison during the attack, reportedly freeing approximately 300 imprisoned terrorists. The practice of freeing inmates has become a regular tactic for AQAP since the Houthis consolidated power.

A few weeks after AQAP gained control of Mukalla, the Yemeni armed forces, in collaboration with Saudi and Emirati special forces, conducted a multi-faceted attack on AQAP in Mukalla in order to retake the city. The campaign, which included airstrikes and ground forces, was successful in driving AQAP from the city and is estimated to have killed up to 800 terrorist fighters.⁹ Since the liberation of Mukalla in April 2016, Al Qaeda in the Arabia Peninsula does not control cities in Yemen.

Daesh

In November 2014, after AQAP was weakened by the counterterrorism campaign led by Saudi Arabia and its allies, Daesh established a foothold in Yemen and formally announced a branch in the country. As of 2015, at least eight sub-groups have operated under the banner of Daesh in Yemen, though the activity of each geographic cell is

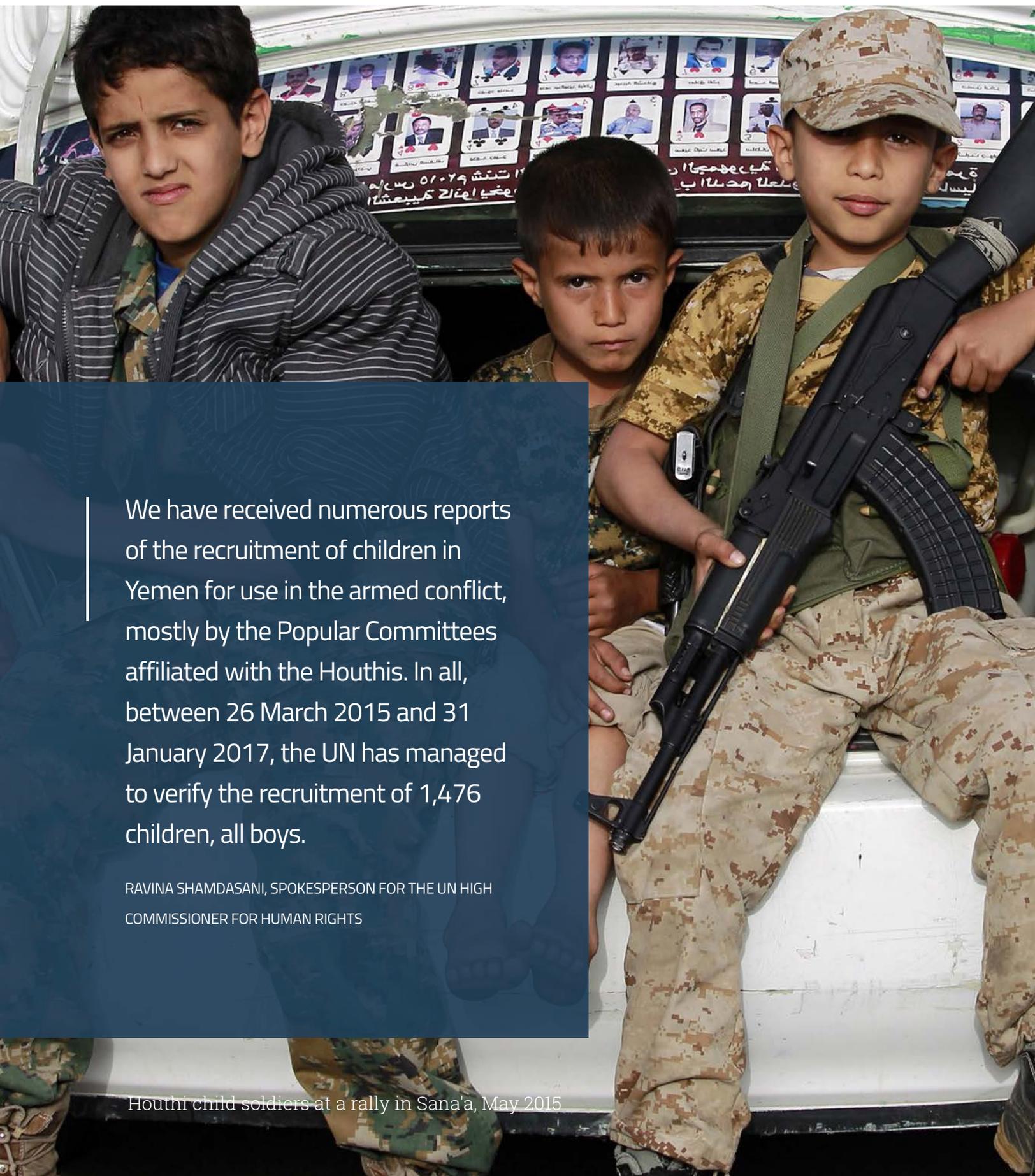
inconsistent across the country. Daesh in Yemen has made opposition to both Saudi Arabia and Houthi militias a large part of its ideology. In response to the progressive loss of AQAP forces in U.S. airstrikes, Daesh fighters presented itself as an alternative to attract a new cadre of followers, some of whom defected from AQAP. Through 2016, analysts estimated that Daesh in Yemen had hundreds of followers.

The group gained international attention in March 2015 with the execution of its first attack in Yemen. Daesh claimed responsibility for two suicide bombings on mosques in Sana'a. The attacks, which killed 137 and wounded 357, marked the beginning of an ongoing series of executions and bombings targeting mosques, Houthi headquarters, and Yemeni army bases.

Daesh has played an increasingly antagonistic role in Yemen's civil war. The group has exploited instability and the country's power vacuum to wage war against the legitimate Yemeni government. In October 2015, Daesh launched its first attack against Yemeni government installations through coordinated suicide bombings in Aden, targeting Yemeni forces under President Hadi and the Saudi-led military coalition. In December 2015, Daesh called for attacks against Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Kingdom's participation in the 68-member Global Coalition Against Daesh and conducting airstrikes against Daesh targets in Syria. Daesh has directly targeted coalition forces in revenge for their coordinated efforts to degrade the terror group's operational bases in Syria. In particular, Daesh fighters have placed Saudi forces in their crosshairs as the coalition has successfully liberated areas of Yemen from Houthi and AQAP control.

The expansion of military coordination between the Saudi-led coalition and Yemeni government forces has prompted an uptick in violent terror from Daesh-affiliate militants. As Saudi Arabia has increased its support to the Yemen air campaign, forces allied with the legitimate government have faced targeted attacks on their security installations. In August 2016, Daesh forces carried out a suicide car bomb attack in northern Aden, killing over 70 Yemeni army recruits. In December 2016, Daesh claimed responsibility for the death of 35 Yemeni soldiers at a military camp in Aden. As the Coalition forces continue to regain control over Yemeni territory, the long-term viability of Daesh is under significant threat.

9 Statement by General Asiri, Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, April 25, 2016



We have received numerous reports of the recruitment of children in Yemen for use in the armed conflict, mostly by the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis. In all, between 26 March 2015 and 31 January 2017, the UN has managed to verify the recruitment of 1,476 children, all boys.

RAVINA SHAMDASANI, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

07

Houthi Violations

In addition to violating UN resolutions, the Houthis have committed many other serious acts, including:

On October 1, missiles from Yemen struck HSV Swift, a UAE civilian logistics ship carrying humanitarian aid while it transited the Bab al Mandab strait. The ship was transiting the Red Sea near the port of Mokha. Houthi-Saleh forces are believed to have used Chinese-built C-802s in the attack. The UN Security Council condemned the attack, saying that “Members take threats to shipping around Bab al Mandab, a strategically important shipping passage, extremely seriously.”

On October 7, a Houthi ballistic missile was fired at the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait;

On October 9, a ballistic missile landed near the Saudi summer capital of Taif, near Makkah;

Another missile was launched at the ancient Yemeni city of Marib on October 9, on the same day two missiles were fired at U.S. Navy ships in the Bab al-Mandab and deflected by defensive systems.

On October 27, the coalition intercepted and destroyed missiles that were targeting Makkah, one of Islam’s most sacred sites.

A 105-page, declassified report to the United Nations Security Council published in August 2016, documented violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights committed by the Houthi-Saleh forces. The report on the implementation of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on Saleh and four Houthi leaders was submitted to the 15-member Security Council Sanctions

Committee, which had imposed an arms embargo on those rebels and soldiers loyal to Saleh. Resolution 2216 of April 14, 2015 demanded that the Houthis withdraw from all seized areas and that they relinquish all seized arms. It also established an arms embargo on the Houthis and on forces loyal to former president Saleh.

The UN report, in addition to other reports of late 2016, details the following such violations by the Houthi rebels:

The concealment of fighters and equipment in or close to civilians in Mokha in the Taiz governorate “with the deliberate aim of avoiding attack” and in violation of international humanitarian law;

The diversion of approximately \$100 million a month from Yemen’s central bank to support the group’s war effort and that the foreign reserves of the central bank had dropped to \$1.3 billion in June 2016 from \$4.6 billion in November 2014;¹⁰

The recruitment of children, and for the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals;¹¹

The usage of fishing vessels for alleged weapons’ transfers, as described by the 2410 Committee of the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM). This latter body was established in May 2016 to facilitate the flow of commercial goods into Yemen, while ensuring compliance with the targeted arms embargo set up in Resolution 2216. This Committee received accounts from member states of such fishing vessels that were intercepted while transferring arms, believed to be for the Houthis.

10 Please see the following list of reports on the conflict in Yemen and Houthi violations at the UN Security Council publications site at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>

11 Reuters, “Exclusive: UN Report on Yemen Says Houthis Used Human Shields, Islamic State Got Cash,” August 4, 2016

By the Numbers

BETWEEN MARCH 2015 AND JANUARY 2017

Projectiles (missiles and mortar rounds), including more than 40 ballistic missiles, launched into Saudi territory by the Houthis.

55,138

Civilians in Saudi Arabia killed by the Houthis.

80

Civilians in Saudi Arabia injured by the Houthis.

630

Civilian locations in Saudi Arabia, including homes, mosques and schools, impacted by Houthi attacks.

2,724

Saudi relief worker from the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center



Saudi humanitarian assistance funded 124 projects totaling \$847 million — offering food, shelter, health and education to the people of Yemen.

08

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Humanitarian Aid to the People of Yemen

The Coalition and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continue to make the protection of civilians the priority in its efforts to restore safety and stability to Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has been the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, providing more than \$847 million in humanitarian assistance. In April 2015, in response to an appeal by the United Nations Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz ordered the donation of \$274 million to the UN to support its humanitarian efforts in Yemen. In May 2015, the Kingdom established the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) to more effectively deliver aid to the people of Yemen. The Kingdom then donated an additional \$267 million.

KSRelief is providing aid to all areas of Yemen, including areas controlled by Houthi militias. In fact, 70 percent of all humanitarian aid to Yemen arrives through the Port of Hodeidah. The city of Hodeidah is one of the major population concentrations under Houthi control and at very high risk of famine.

KSRelief, cooperates with a number of international humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, the UN, and Doctors Without Borders, to facilitate their efforts in Yemen.

KSRelief is also working closely with the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in training 3,153 health workers on the social management of acute malnutrition and opened 854 centers for therapeutic nutrition program. The program also provided medical treatment and follow up cases of acute malnutrition. KSRelief mobile health teams have treated over a quarter of a million children suffering from

acute malnutrition and provided immunization and postnatal care to over 1.2 million children throughout Yemen. The teams also provided services for pregnant women and post-delivery care for over 220,000 women.

KSR relief has also provided funding to the World Health Organization to assist with the organization's life-saving health care services in Yemen. As of May 2016, funding from KSR relief has allowed WHO to deploy 14 mobile teams to five governorates in Yemen. Additionally, WHO has sent several health facility teams to Yemen, including seven surgical teams, to provide trauma care in the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Hajjah, Sada'a and Amran. Funding from KSR relief have allowed the WHO to provide life-saving medicines and supplies to hospitals serving more than 2 million patients.

Since its establishment, KSR relief has been an active force for providing aid to the people of Yemen.

In March 2017, KSR relief sent 58 trucks carrying medical supplies and equipment to a number of provinces in Yemen. Of these, 11 trucks delivered supplies to Republic Hospital in Aden and six trucks to Mareb Hospital. KSR relief has entered into a number of agreements with private hospitals in Aden and Taiz aimed at providing full medical care for more than 750 wounded in these provinces. KSR relief seeks to activate the role of government hospitals to treat the injured inside Yemeni territories by providing medical services and treatment devices.

KSR relief has launched 51 projects in health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation in Yemen totaling more than \$208 million and benefiting 24.5 million Yemeni citizens, in addition to programs providing medical care and treatment for people inside Yemeni territory.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), KSR relief provided basic services such as diabetes and cancer medicines, and support the operation of emergency rooms by providing 350,000 gallons of fuel to 88 hospitals and 19 health facilities in Yemen. KSR relief has provided more than 12 million vaccines, to date, for Yemeni children against measles, rubella, tetanus and whooping cough.

In January 2017, KSR relief distributed 300,000 food baskets in the Hodeidah Province of Yemen. The baskets are expected to benefit more than 460,000 Yemenis in need.

Humanitarian Assistance in Yemen

- Saudi Arabian remains by far the largest donor of aid to Yemen.
- \$847 million in humanitarian assistance through King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center.
- Legal residency inside the Kingdom to 600,000 Yemeni refugees fleeing the civil war.
- 12 million vaccines for Yemeni children.



In July 2016, KSRelief distributed more than 900 tons of medicine and medical supplies as part of its continuing support of health care services in Yemen.

In another major humanitarian effort, Saudi Arabia has allowed Yemenis who fled the civil war and entered the Kingdom illegally to adjust their status and become legal residents. This initiative has enabled more than 600,000 Yemenis to obtain medical care, education, and jobs.

The U.S. and the U.K. also helped form the Friends of Yemen Group, a multilateral forum of 31 concerned countries that was launched at a January 2010 conference in London in order to raise funds for Yemen's development and increase donor coordination.



The Coalition has not imposed a blockade or an economic boycott on Yemen, and it continues to grant permits in record time for all relief and humanitarian ships.

09

Blockade Accusations

The obstruction of the flow of commercial and humanitarian shipments in Yemen is confined to ports in areas controlled by Houthi militias and forces loyal to former President Saleh. These parties have deliberately obstructed the entry of shipments in order to deepen the humanitarian crisis and arouse international public opinion against the Coalition.

In order to ensure that maritime commerce to Yemen complies with the UN Security Council arms embargo, the Government of Yemen authorized the creation of the the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) on May 2, 2016. Based in Djibouti, UNVIM provides fast and impartial clearance services for shipping companies transporting commercial imports and bilateral assistance to Yemeni ports outside of the authority of the Government of Yemen. Ships bound for Yemen are cleared expeditiously. For example, in March 2017, the most recent month for which data is available, 34 certificates of clearance were issued expeditiously. These ships transported 636,810 metric tons of cargo to Yemeni ports, including 254,690 metric tons of food.¹²

In addition to hindering humanitarian and trade shipments, Houthi militias and forces loyal to former President Saleh have exploited their control over Yemeni ports, including the Port of Hodeidah, by engaging in smuggling activities. This has created a black market for petroleum, goods, and humanitarian supplies. Houthi militias have used the proceeds to finance their operations and raise the profile of their leaders. They have similarly used their control of ports as a political bargaining chip by imposing sieges and starvation on provinces and cities.

The Coalition has not imposed a blockade or an economic boycott on Yemen, and it continues to grant immediate and periodic permits in a record time for all relief and humanitarian ships. In the case of commercial ships, the UNVIM, in cooperation with the Coalition and the legitimate government of Yemen, issues permits on a neutral basis to ships entering all Yemeni ports.

12 UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen: Statement by the Secretary-General, May 3, 2016. Operational Snapshot: March 2017. Available online at <https://www.vimye.org/media>

Destroying land mines laid by
Houthi forces, April 2016

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT), tasked with assessing claims of violations and accidents as a result of the Coalition's military operations in Yemen, continues to display a strong commitment to independent investigations by releasing its findings to the public.



10

Steps to Reduce Civilian Casualties

Safeguard Civilians

The Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen is committed to protecting civilians in Yemen and has taken steps to avoid casualties in an ongoing war zone. Among these steps, the Coalition launched an independent assessment team, fostered active partnerships with relief organizations and focused on safeguarding Yemen's urban centers as part of a concerted effort to protect civilians and uphold international humanitarian law.

Saudi Arabia established an independent Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) and tasked it with assessing claims of violence against civilians by Coalition forces, including violations and accidental fire incidents. The Coalition's JIAT is composed of military members, weapons experts and legal specialists in the laws of war. The independent group reviews reports of Coalition activities that are known to have led to civilian casualties, and offers recommendations for ways to avoid future incidents.

One of the JIAT recommendations adopted by the Coalition is the policy to issue repeated warnings to Houthi militias and Saleh forces so that they can evacuate cities prior to a Coalition air strike. The Coalition also has heightened its emphasis on safeguarding critical infrastructure and, as a result, civilian lives in Yemen's urban centers.

The Coalition is working alongside UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross as part of a collaborative approach to minimize the possibility of harm to civilians, medical personnel, journalists and relief organizations.

JIAT Findings

GREAT HALL INCIDENT

With respect to the unfortunate Great Hall incident in Sana'a on October 8, 2016, the Coalition expressed its deepest condolences and support to the victims' families, and for all those affected by violence in Yemen. After conducting immediate investigations, the JIAT concluded that a party affiliated to the Yemeni Presidency of the General Chief of Staff passed inaccurate information that there was a gathering of armed Houthi leaders in a known location in Sana'a, and insisted that the location be targeted immediately as a legitimate military target.

The JIAT found that because of non-compliance with Coalition Rules of Engagement and Procedures (ROEs), and the release of inaccurate information, a Coalition aircraft wrongly targeted the location, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.

The Coalition, tasked with supporting the legitimate government of Yemen, has publicly affirmed that it accepts the results of the investigations conducted by the JIAT and is committed to implementing its recommendations.

ABS HOSPITAL

In response to the alleged bombing carried out by the coalition forces on Abs Hospital in the Yemeni city of Abs in the province of Hjjah on August 8, 2016, which resulted in killing seven people and injuring 13 others, the official spokesperson for the JIAT confirmed that the Coalition was unaware of the presence of the hospital that was inadvertently struck.

Intelligence reports confirmed that Houthi militia leaders were gathered in the northern part of the city of Abs. The Coalition forces then targeted the location of that gathering. As a result, air forces monitored a moving vehicle from the targeted site heading southwards, pursued and shelled it immediately. The vehicle was next to the building that had no signs of a hospital before the bombing. It was later proved to be Abs Hospital.

KHALEQ MARKET

On February 28, 2016, the UN Secretary General strongly condemned the airstrike in Nahem District in Sana'a on February 27 that killed at least 32 civilians and injured at least 41. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found after reviewing

the facts that one of the Coalition's warplanes was on a humanitarian mission close to the Popular Resistance and the army loyal to the legitimate government. It observed two heavily armed transport vehicles and armed Houthi militia stopped near a small market beside some small buildings and canvas tents on a road linking the Directorate of Naham with Sana'a. These transport vehicles and Houthi militia were considered to be high-value military targets and a laser-guided missile was deployed.

ASMAA SCHOOL, HODEIDAH

Refuting allegations by the Amnesty International that Asmaa school, located in the city of Al-Mansouriya in the Yemeni province of Hodeidah was subject to air shelling on August 24, 2015, JIAT spokesperson Al-Mansour said that the site was targeted based on surveillance information showing armed Houthi militias were using it as a headquarters, storage facility and distribution post for weapons smuggled through the Hodeidah port. The site was classified as a military target of high value.

Based on the laws of war, the legal protections of civilian sites are dropped when that site is being used for a military purpose. Considering this fact, as well as the fact that students had vacated the school for some time, the Coalition forces targeted the site. The investigation showed that no human life was lost and the building only sustained partial damage (less than 25 percent.) The Joint Incidents Assessment Team reached the conclusion that the procedures followed by the Coalition forces targeting the site were correct.

MOKHA COMPLEX

Human Rights Watch alleged on July 27, 2015 that the Coalition forces bombed a compound in the Directorate of Mokha, Taiz governorate three days earlier, resulting in the deaths of 65 civilians. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found, after reviewing the intelligence information, that there were four targets in the areas controlled by the Houthi militia and forces of the former President Saleh. These included coastal defense missile batteries, which pose an immediate danger to ships and the Coalition's naval forces in the Red Sea.

It was later found that a residential compound was erroneously targeted due to inaccurate information from the intelligence source. The Joint Incidents Assessment Team informed the Coalition forces about these findings, and the coalition has expressed its deep regret at this unintentional error. Coalition forces



Foreign Minister Adel Bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir

CHATHAM HOUSE | SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

"There is a fault with how information is gathered in Yemen, which is not accurate. People say this is a school. Well, it may have been a school a year ago, but was not a school when it was bombed, and then they say the Coalition hit a school, not true.

People accuse us — the Coalition — of bombing a wedding party in which 120 people died. We had no planes the day of the wedding, or the day after the wedding. But I do not see anyone retracting the charges.

We were accused of bombing the old city of Sana'a, common heritage of mankind, when we had no fliers anywhere near the old city."

are committed to observing the rules laid down in international conventions of humanitarian law. In particular, the Coalition maintains its commitment not to target civilians during military operations and to take all measures to preserve their safety. The Coalition confirmed its readiness to make financial reparation to the victims' families in accordance with international law once the supporting documentation has been submitted to the Reparation Commission.

HAYDAN HOSPITAL

According to the claims of Doctors Without Borders, the Haydan Hospital in Saa'da Province was bombed by the Coalition forces. The Joint Team found after reviewing the facts that the Coalition forces had accurate intelligence information that there

was a military gathering of Houthi militia in the Directorate of Haydan. A warplane was ordered to strike the military gathering. After verification of the incident from the Joint Incidents Assessment Team, it became clear that the building was a medical facility that the armed Houthi militia was using as a military shelter in contravention of international law [under Article 52, Paragraph 2, Annex Protocol I]. This fact made it a legitimate target after coalition forces warned the persons in charge under Article 19 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The team has confirmed that Coalition forces were unable to warn Doctors Without Borders because of the immediate threat posed by the armed Houthi militia using the medical facility located on the borders of the Kingdom. Although the Coalition bombed the installations as a military target, it acknowledges that it should have warned Doctors Without Borders that they would lose international protection before carrying out the air strike. However, the Houthi militia had already fled the building, which was empty—there were no medical staff and no patients at the facility. There were no casualties.

MOBILE CLINIC OF DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, TAIZ

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team found that Coalition forces targeted hostile militant gatherings at the request of Yemeni forces loyal to the legitimate government and local popular resistance forces in Directorate of Hoban, Taiz Province. This was considered a high-priority target whose destruction would deliver military advantage.

The tent of the Doctors Without Borders organization was not bombed, but was affected by these bombings due to its proximity to the target. There were no civilian casualties. Coalition forces expressed its regrets about this unintentional error.

The Joint Incidents Assessment Team established that the clinic was not a direct target and concluded that Doctors Without Borders should have set up its facility away from military targets in order to avoid the risk of casualties. JIAT also established that the Coalition coordinates with the humanitarian organizations and works with them to assist with their humanitarian missions. JIAT is satisfied that all safety procedures implemented by Coalition forces were observed and that they adhered to international law.

Appendix

Main Actors in the Yemen Crisis

2011 - Present

President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour al Hadi

President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour al Hadi is a former military officer, having served in the Yemen armed forces as a field marshal.

Hadi's rise as President of Yemen began with his role as Acting President between June 4 and September 23, 2011 following the attacks on the Presidential Palace in Sana'a in the wake of the 'Arab Spring' protests—a period referred to as the "2011 Yemeni Uprising"—in which then-President Saleh went to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. Hadi became Acting President again on November 23, 2011 after Saleh moved into a non-active role pending the results of the next presidential elections. Hadi was chosen as a president for a two-year transitional period on February 21, 2012.

In a September 2012 interview¹³, Hadi warned that his country, still reeling from the popular uprising that ousted Saleh, risked a descent into a civil war "worse than Afghanistan" should an upcoming months-long national dialogue fail to resolve the state's deep political and societal rifts. Hadi warned that Yemen was facing three separate enemies, which he believed were extremist terrorists Al Qaeda, pirates in the Gulf of Aden and Houthi rebel militias. He stated his strong belief that Iran was supporting these adversaries.

Ali Abdullah Saleh al Sanhani al Humairi

As of the early 2000s, the Houthis fought against the national government of former Yemeni President Saleh. This radically changed in May 2015, when Saleh confirmed his alliance with that group. Saleh is not Houthi, but is Zaydi and a part of the Sahan tribe of northern Yemen. Traditionally, the Houthis and/or 'Ansar Allah,' the political organization of the Houthis, distrusted Saleh and saw him as corrupt. These views

were not unfounded: In February 2015 a panel of UN experts released a report, alleging that, during his time in power, Saleh amassed a fortune worth between \$30 billion to \$62 billion.¹⁴

The background to his political career and that arc of development vis-à-vis the Houthis is as follows:

From 1978 to 1990 Saleh served as President of North Yemen until its unification with South Yemen in 1990. The South accepted Saleh as president of the newly unified country. A former soldier, he had participated in the 1962 coup against Yemeni King Mohammad al Badr which saw the establishment of the establishment of the Republic of Yemen that year.

From 2004, a sporadic civil war in the country has been underway with the security forces of the Yemen government battling “the Believing Youth” (Al-Shabab al Mumin), the pro-Zaydi Houthi-led movement based in the mountains west of Saa’da, the capital of Yemen’s northwestern most province.

On February 2, 2011, facing a Tunisia-style, “Arab Spring” national uprising, Saleh announced that he would not seek re-election in 2013, but would serve out the remainder of his term. In response to government violence against unarmed protesters, 12 MPs of Saleh’s party resigned on February 23. By March 5, this number had increased to 13, as well as the addition of two deputy ministers. On November 23, 2011, Saleh agreed to legally transfer the office and powers of the presidency to his deputy, Vice President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. On February 27, 2012, Saleh formally ceded power to Hadi and stepped down as the President of Yemen.

Since that time, Saleh has been a behind-the-scenes ally of the Houthi movement in Yemen. Tribesmen and government forces loyal to Saleh have joined the Houthis in their ambitions to take over the government. On July 28, 2016, Saleh and the Houthi rebels announced a formal alliance to the fight Saudi-led military coalition, to be run by a political council of 10 members—made up of five members from Saleh’s General People’s Congress, and five from the Houthis.

13 Blake Hounshell, “Yemen’s president warns of a civil war ‘worse than Afghanistan,’” *Foreign Policy*, September 29, 2012

14 BBC, “Yemen ex-leader Saleh ‘amassed up to \$60 billion’ - UN probe” February 25, 2015

The Houthis

Houthi is the name of an ancient and powerful Yemeni dynasty, in turn named after a town known as Houthi or “Huthi” that is located about halfway between Saa’da in the north and Yemen’s capital Sana’a to the south. The al Houthi family is a “sayyid” family—that is, descendants of the Prophet Mohammad and who played key theological and political roles in north Yemen. This family, and the political-rebel movement whose adherents collectively refer to themselves by “the Houthis,” adhere to what is known “Zaidism” or “Zaydism”—the Zaidi school of jurisprudence which emerged in the 8th century as a moderate interpretation of the Shia branch of Islam. Approximately 35 to 40 percent of Muslims in Yemen adhere to Zaidism.

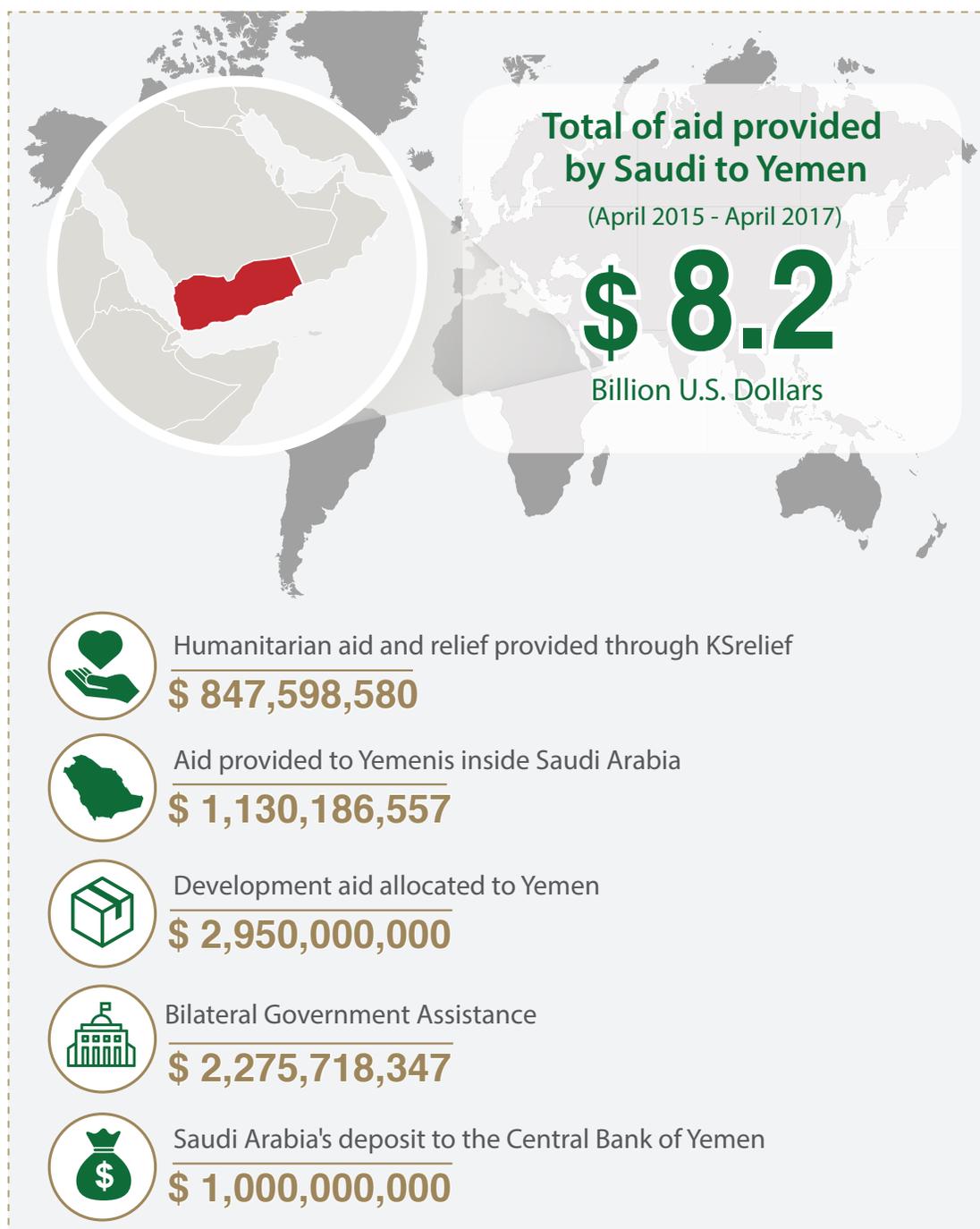
Zaydis ruled parts of Yemen for almost 1,000 years until 1962 and were even supported by Saudi Arabia in the 1970s. But then the Houthis, who emerged as a Zaidi revivalist movement in the 1990s, fought a series of wars between 2004 and 2010 against the Saudi-supported central Yemeni state led by then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Leadership in the movement has rested in various al Houthi family relatives. At present, Abdul Malik Badreddin al Houthi is the leader. He leads this group with his brothers Yahia Badreddin al Houthi, Abdul Karim Badreddin al Houthi, and the late Hussein Badreddin al Houthi. Abdul Malik al Houthi is the leading figure in an insurgency in the Saa’da province in northern Yemen, which has been continuing from 2004 to the present day.

Summary of Saudi Aid to Yemen

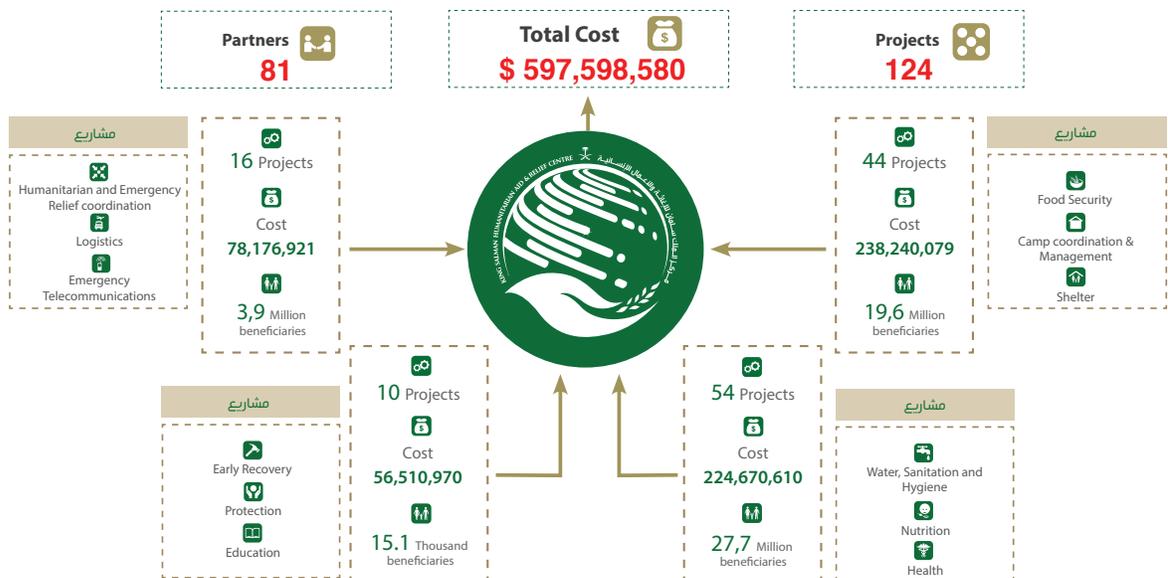


مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

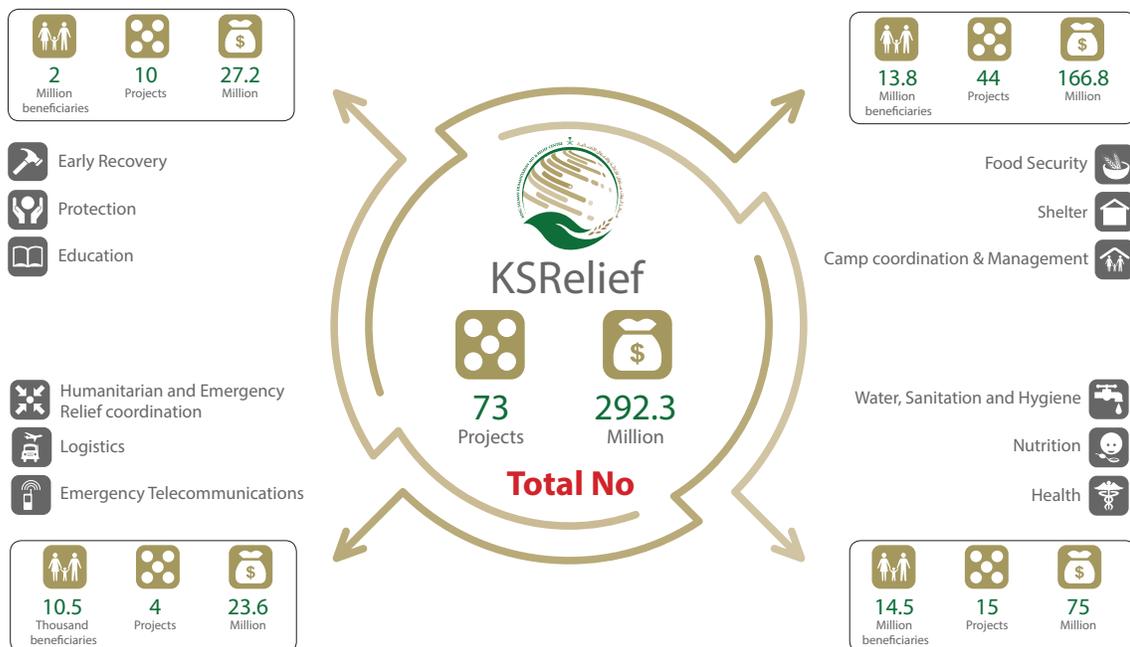




KSRelief's Projects in Yemen



KSRelief's Projects for women & children in Yemen

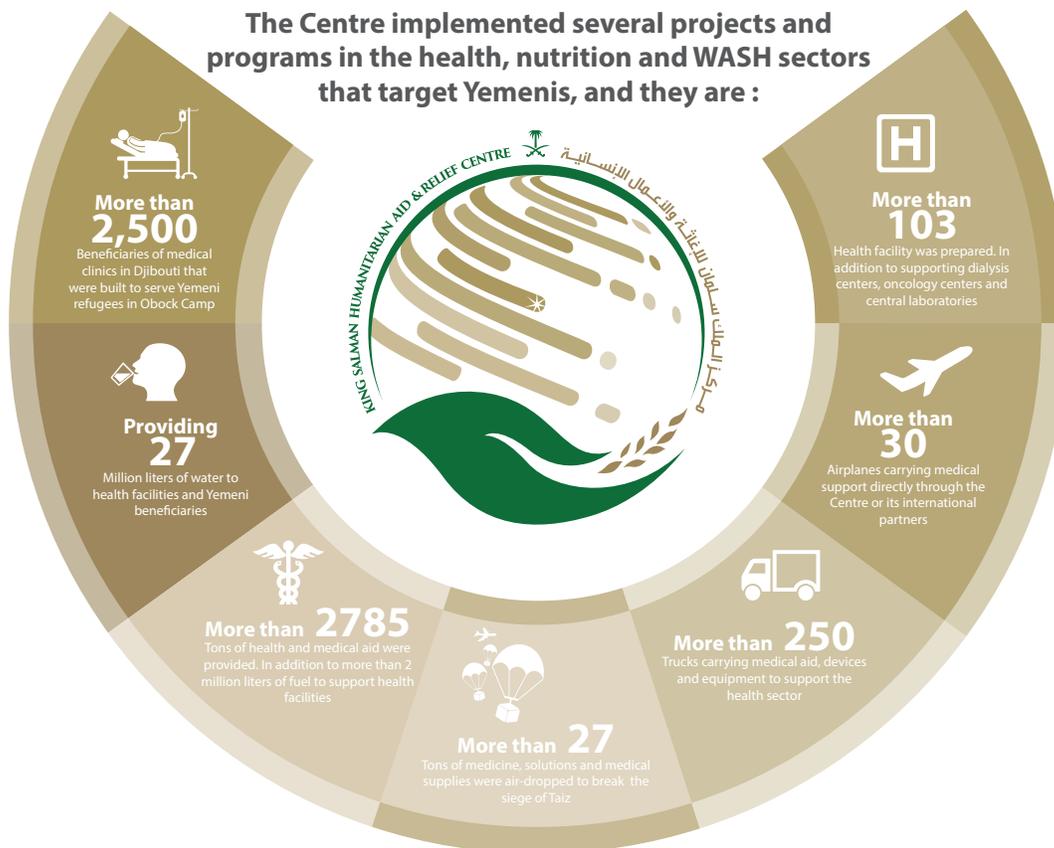




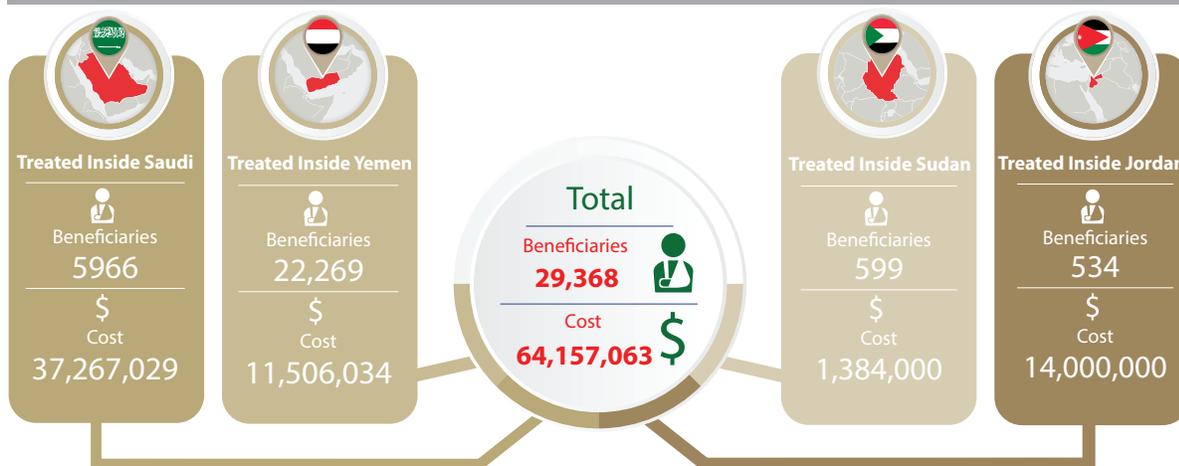
مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

Health Sector Projects in Yemen

The Centre implemented several projects and programs in the health, nutrition and WASH sectors that target Yemenis, and they are :



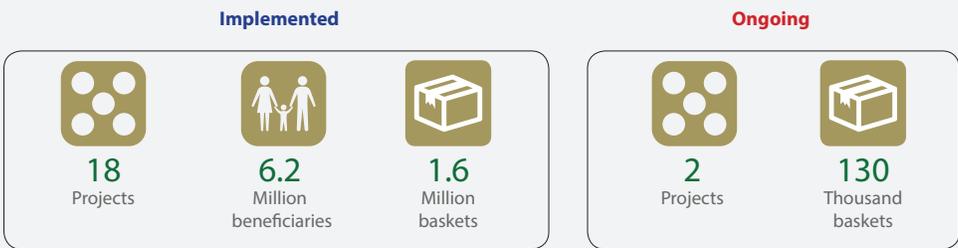
Saudi's Aid to Wounded Yemenis



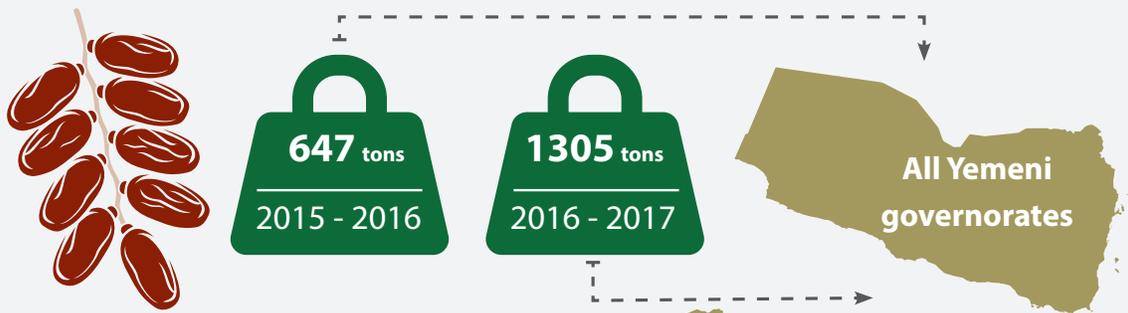


Food Security Projects in Yemen

Implemented Food Baskets Projects



Dates Project



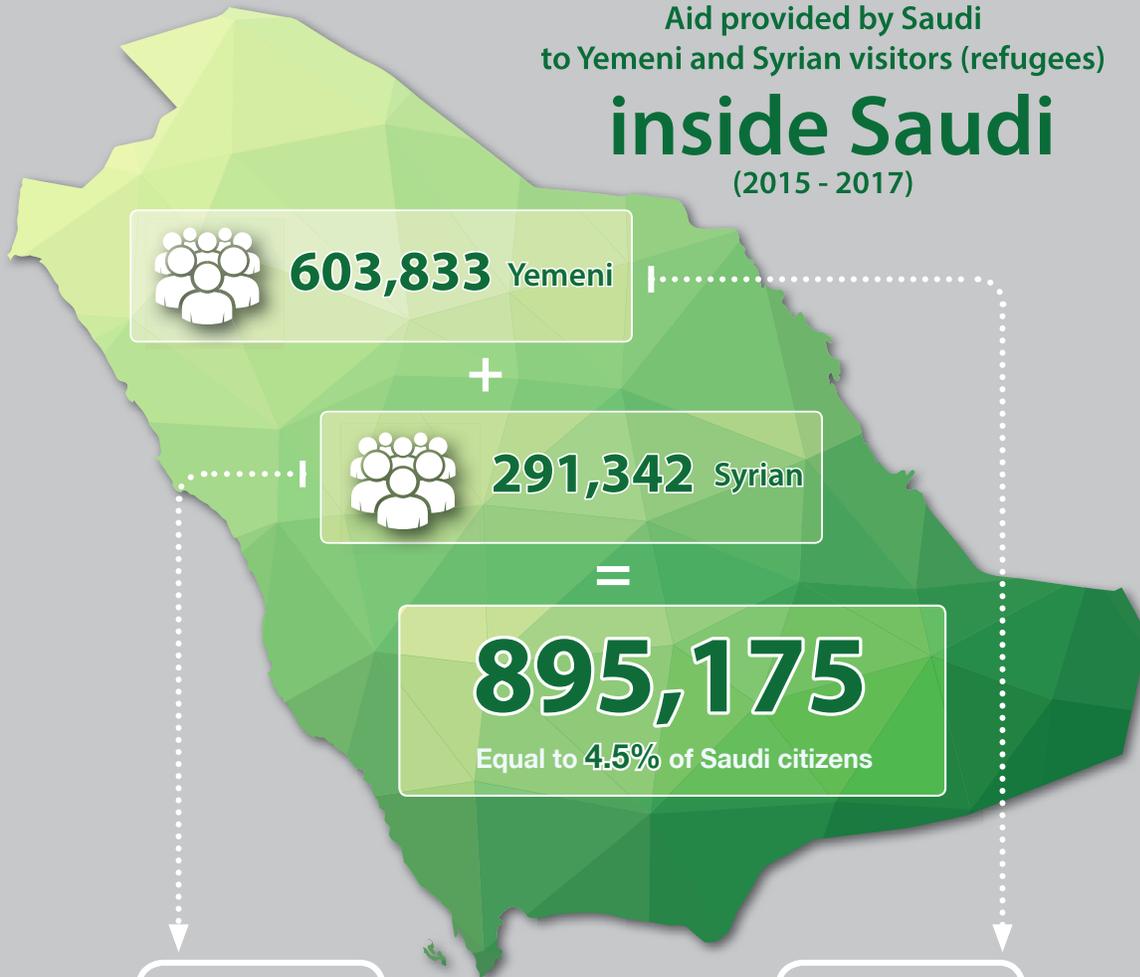
Our Partners





مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

Aid provided by Saudi
to Yemeni and Syrian visitors (refugees)
inside Saudi
(2015 - 2017)



Health
Saudi hospitals provided medical services



Around **35** thousand beneficiary

Primary Health Care Centers received



Around **370** thousand beneficiary

Education
Higher Education Grant



More than **8** thousand students

Public Education



141 thousand students

Health
Saudi hospitals provided medical services



Around **41** thousand beneficiary

Primary Health Care Centers received



Around **437** thousand beneficiary

Education
Higher Education Grant



More than **4** thousand students

Public Education



285 thousand students

