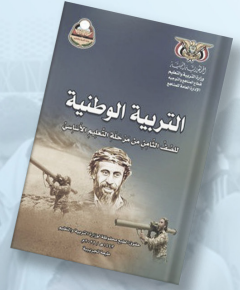




# Monthly Briefing

August - 2021



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## Monthly Briefing

August 2021

2021

## **The Political Scene:**

- During August 2021, the country has witnessed an escalation of hostilities in Marib, including an increase in the attacks by the Houthi drones on the liberated areas and Saudi lands. This coincides with the increasing complexity of the humanitarian situation in light of the floods and conditions of famine, which is beginning to become apparent in several Yemeni regions, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the south of the country.

- **August 8:** Hans Grundberg, the new UN envoy to Yemen, has begun his first assignment with a special meeting with the Yemeni Prime Minister, Maeen Abdul-Malik, via video-conference. Then his movements stopped, but he will officially resume his activities next September.

- **August 9:** The former Minister of Transportation in the Yemeni government, Saleh al-Jabwani, has warned that there are an international and regional moves to remove the Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi from his position.

- **August 9:** President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi presided over a meeting of the National Defense Council, which included his deputy, Lieutenant-General Ali Mohsen Saleh, Speaker of Parliament Sultan al-Barakani, Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik and Shura Council Speaker Ahmed Obaid bin Daghr.

- **August 10:** U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken discussed, in a call with his Saudi counterpart, Faisal bin Farhan, a comprehensive cease-fire plan in Yemen and the need to take immediate steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

- **August 11:** Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi has received Khalid bin Salman, the Saudi Deputy Defense Minister, who affirmed his country's firm and supportive stance on Yemen and its constitutional legitimacy under the leadership of President Hadi.

**August 23:** The United Nations expressed its deep regret — during the Security Council session — at the lack of progress in the “four-point plan” solution in Yemen, which includes: a cease-fire, reopening of Sana'a airport, easing restrictions imposed on the port of Hodeidah and Saleef, and the resumption of direct political negotiations between the Yemeni parties.

The military conflict continues on more than 50 fronts between the Yemeni army and the Houthi militia, most of them concentrated in the governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Jawf and the city of Aden — the country's temporary capital — which has become an open battleground between armed currents of Southern Transitional Council — backed by the UAE — and tribal militias belonging to southern governorates, such as Lahj.

**August 25:** In Criminal Case No. 4 of 2020, the military court sentenced the accused, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, and 173 others to death by firing squad, on charges of overthrowing the Republican regime and the constitutional authorities, collaborating with the state of Iran and committing military and war crimes.

## **The Economical Scene:**

- The sharp division in the national currency between the government and the Houthi group developed at the end of 2019, when the Houthis preventing the circulation of new banknotes printed through the Bank of Aden to face the liquidity crisis, and that crisis doubled until it reached record levels that cast a shadow on the fragile economic situation in the country, due to the war with the increase of the people's suffering around the country.

- **August 5:** The Central Bank of Yemen has directed the commercial and Islamic banks in the country to quickly transfer their operations and management centers to Aden, the temporary capital. The announcement was followed by a threat targeted at banks that do not transfer within a specific period that they will be placed on the "black list".

This was also accompanied by the infusion of a large amount of Yemeni currency, 1,000 Ryal note, by the Central Bank in Aden, and withdrew the old thousand ryal note, as a measure to address distortions in the price of the national currency, and the currency split in areas under the control of the government Houthis.

**August 22:** The Houthi group admitted to confiscating 42 million Yemeni riyals from travelers on the road linking the governorates of Aden and Taiz, because they carried the currency printed by the Central Bank of Yemen in Aden to the market at the beginning of the same month.

- According to a recent UN report, the Yemeni currency has lost 36% of its value in a year, which created unexpected increases in food prices. The decrease of the currency value caused by the disparity between the legitimate government and the coup government in Sana'a, which led to vast the differences of the exchange prices in north and south Yemen.

- The scale of hunger in Yemen has been increased more than 40% in eight governates: Aljawf, Amran, Shabwah, Abyan, Ad Dhalee, Lahj and Raimah. Also, there are another seven governates with highest levels of food insecurity around 30%, which are Hajjah, Sanaa, Marib, Dhamar, Ibb and Taiz (via a UN report).

## The Military Scene:

### First: The National Army:

The Houthi militia could not make any significant progress in August at Marib. On the contrary, they suffered from heavy losses among their gunmen, while the National Army has maintained the military gains during the past month at Ma'rib front, "Rahba" Directorate, with limited progress in Al-Jawf Governorate.

- **August 2:** Brigadier General Abdul Wahed Dokar Al-Haddad, commander of the 2nd Brigade Road Protection, was killed during confrontations with terrorist elements in the Al-Arqaen area in Ma'rib governorate.

- **August 19:** The Yemeni Minister of Defense, Lieutenant-General Muhammad Al-Maqdashi, has met the Commander of the Joint Forces and Deputy Chief of the Saudi General Staff, Lieutenant-General Mutlaq bin Salem Al-Azima, at the headquarters of the coalition in the Saudi capital (Riyadh).

- **August 21:** The Minister of media in the Yemeni government, Muammar Al-Eryani, announced that the air raid by the coalition has killed an Iranian military expert (Haidar Sirjan) and nine others from the Houthi militia on August 20 in the Serwah district in Marib, supported with details of their movements and missions inside Yemen.

- **August 22:** The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh, denied the news of the killing of the military expert (Sarjan), and, at the same time, he denied the presence of their advisors in Yemen, although the assistant commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, General Rostam Qasemi, confirmed the presence of their advisors in Yemen were working with the Houthi group.

## **Second: The Security Situation:**

- **August 14:** The Special Forces in Ma'rib announced that they have seized terrorist cells and stopped the attempts of smuggling weapons, contraband, missile oil and parts used in the manufacture of drones.

- **August 20:** The Government forces in Al-Jawf Governorate revealed a truck containing 20,000 official passports, which was on its way to the areas of the Houthi group in Sana'a.

## **The Humanitarian Scene:**

- **August 8:** The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) declares that 8.1 million Yemeni children need emergency education assistance, which is a huge increase compared to 1.1 million children who were in need before the 2015 war.

- **August 20:** The International Committee of the Red Cross said that 3 million Yemeni children are unable to attend schools this year because of the war that has been raging for seven years.

**August 23:** Martin Griffiths' briefing paper about Yemen at the Security Council session announced that 5 million people are one step away from famine, while another 5 million are two steps away.



## The Infringements:

### Mines:

August is one of the months in which the deaths and injuries from mines have been recorded in some governorates. Many dead and wounded people were women and children. However, the Saudi “Masam” project had removed 4,886 mines in just three weeks of August, which is a record number of mines.

- **August 8:** The Yemeni Landmine Monitor announced that it had documented 100 victims (killed/injured) by Houthi group mines in a number of Yemeni regions, during the first six months of this year. Within the months May, June and July, 18 people were killed, including 10 children and 5 women. Many of them were concentrated in Taiz, Khub and Al Sha’af District, Al-Jawf Governorate, Al-Hodeidah and Hajjah.

- **August 3:** Omar Mujalis (a 55-year-old man) was killed and three others were injured as a result of the explosion of a landmine planted by the Houthi group, in “Hays” district, in the south of Hodeidah governorate.

The killing of Mujalis came just four days after three people were killed and 11 others were injured when another landmine exploded in the Al-Hada area of Al-Durayhimi district, in the south of Al-Hodeidah.

- **August 4:** Mohsen Ali Aoun, Colonel of the Yemeni army, was killed by an explosion of a landmine planted by the Houthi group in Al-Jawf Governorate.

- **August 4:** Five Sudanese soldiers were killed and three others were injured when an anti-vehicle mine exploded, while they were in their military vehicle in the Midi district of Hajjah governorate, on the border strip between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

### **Violations of Houthi-controlled areas:**

**August 5:** An artist, Fouad al-Kibsi, was detained for hours at a Houthi point in Al-Hodeidah Governorate, in the southwest of Yemen.

**August 5:** The assassination of an academic engineer, Muhammad Ali Naim, in the capital, Sana'a, a few hours after he criticized, on his Facebook page, customs tariffs being raised in government and Houthi areas.

**August 5:** The Associate Professor of Environment and Natural Resources at Ibb University, Dr. Abdullah Al-Dhibani, was assaulted, with his accompanied son, by an armed gang in an area in the "Jabal Rabbi" north of the city of Ibb.

- **August 10:** The Houthi group released the journalist, Fahd Al-Arhabi, 25 days after his arrest in the city of Amran, for publishing details of a wedding hall being stormed and the groom being arrested.

- **August 12:** The Houthi group announced the dismissal of 904 officers, from the Ministry of the Interior, who supported the legitimate government in the first steps of "cleansing" that the group's leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, announced in one of his speeches.

The Houthi group carried out a compulsory recruitment campaign for 20 children in Hazm al-Adeen District, Isolat al-Sha'our, west of Ibb city.

Yemeni academic Dr. Youssef Al-Bawab, during his trial, demanded an investigation with the Houthi leader, Yahya Saree, because of the types of torture Saree practiced on him inside prison. Dr. Al-Bawab is Professor of Linguistics at Sana'a University. He published 11 books and supervised 30 scientific researches. He was kidnapped on October 20, 2016, near his home in Sana'a. He is facing a death sentence and is still in prison to this day.

- **August 17:** Lawyer Abdul Majeed Sabra revealed that the journalist, Younis Abdul Salam, who has been missing in Sana'a for days, was kidnapped by the Houthi group and is currently in one of its prisons and suffers from depression.

- **August 21:** Al-Houthi group admits to kidnapping 141 people during one week (August 8 to August 15) in its areas of control, on charges of what it calls "belonging to aggression".

### **The Transitional Council:**

The forces of the Transitional Council refused to release the activist, Fahd Al-Riyashi, who was arrested on July 31, while he was arriving at Aden International Airport via Yemeni Airlines.

- **August 17:** Gunmen affiliated with the Transitional Council set fire to Amjad Khaled's house, in the Dar Saad district of Aden.

- **August 18:** Gunmen affiliated with the Transitional Council set fire to the house of Khaled Muhammad Saleh, also in the Dar Saad area.

- **August 19:** The UAE-backed Transitional Council sent military reinforcements toward the Dar Saad police station after the most violent clashes with tribal gunmen from the Al-Sabaiha area, which resulted in the killing and wounding of five on both sides.

### **The Social Scene:**

**August 22:** The Yemeni Supreme National Emergency Committee for Covid19, directed the reopening and reactivation of isolation centers, coinciding with the start of the country's third wave of the epidemic. The total confirmed cases of infection in the liberated governorates reached 7,487 cases, including 1,416 deaths, and 4,622 recovered.

**August 22:** The Houthi group issued a circular to private schools in the capital, Sana'a, which said to not distribute the old edition textbook, but to rely on the new edition, in which huge additions were made that were classified as sectarian par excellence.

**August 23:** During a Security Council session, Martin Griffiths announced that 1,200 civilians have been killed since the beginning of this year as a result of the war that has been raging in Yemen for seven years.

### **Al-Mahra:**

**August 7:** The British newspaper Daily Express revealed that 40 soldiers of the British special forces arrived at Al-Ghaydah Airport in Al-Mahra Governorate, with a unit specialized in electronic warfare in the field of communications.

**August 11:** The Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah) called on the Yemeni government to provide a transparent explanation about the presence of British special forces in Al-Mahra Governorate, far east of Yemen.

The governorate witnessed peaceful protests demanding the departure of foreign Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the British forces.

## **UAE:**

**July 25:** The UAE transferred six Yemeni detainees, from Guantanamo Bay to one of its prisons in Hadramout Governorate without prior coordination with the Yemeni government.

**July 25:** Two Emirati planes arrived, one at Al-Rayyan Airport and the second at Socotra Airport, carrying weapons shipments to support the loyal forces of the transitional council.

The UAE refused to grant the Yemeni boxing team entry visas to participate in the Asian Championship, which will be held August 23-30, while it has not justified this ban so far. The Yemeni government considered the decision in an official statement as a punitive decision.

## **Yemeni expatriates:**

September 6: Saudi Arabia took an undeclared decision to expel Yemeni academics working in southern Saudi Arabia. They were notified of the decision, starting from August 8, provided that the actual suspension of academics began on August 14. A partial retreat of the decision took place on August 21 for some universities (Al-Baha University and King Khalid University), while at three other universities (Najran, Jizan and Bisha), the academics did not return to their work.

The Saudi government has not disclosed the justifications for the deportation orders and the suspension of contract renewal for Yemeni academics working in universities and medical institutions in southern Saudi Arabia.

The new Saudi measures included the rest of the Yemeni expatriates of all professions, who are now threatened with permanent deportation from southern Saudi Arabia, in particular, and from the Kingdom as a whole, in general.

The World Federation of Yemeni Communities announced the initiation of legal procedures against the decisions taken by the Saudi authorities to expel and deport tens of thousands of Yemeni employees from the south of the Kingdom.

### **General News:**

**August 9:** A child, named Aboud Mustafa Al-Alimi, who was displaced from the Al-Wazi'iyah district in Taiz governorate and who was working as a tissue seller, was killed when he was hit by three bullets in front of the Al-Thawra General Hospital, in the center of the city of Ibb.

**August 10:** A gang in the city of Taiz killed Colonel Issam Al-Hareq and his four brothers and burned their homes. This was as a result of a dispute over a plot of land by a gang leader named Majed Al-Araj, who was killed in the same clashes.

**August 10:** Two soldiers from the Giants' forces and a tribal gunman were killed in confrontations between forces from the Giants Brigades, on one side, and gunmen from Al-Sabiha tribe in the coastal Khor Amira area of the Mudaraba Directorate in Lahj governorate, on the other side.

**August 15:** A fire broke out in the real estate documentation and registration building in Aden, the temporary capital, which contained archives of documents on agricultural and state lands, sales contracts, concessions and documents of transferring ownership of real estate and land.

**August 23:** Saudi media admitted to killing an officer in the Saudi army, Nayef bin Fahd Al-Sahli, while he was on the southern border in Jizan region, in military confrontations with the Houthi group.