



THE YEMEN TREND

**JULY
2018**



RESEARCH . ANALYSIS . ADVISORY

The Yemen Trend is a monthly digest that highlights Yemen's key economic and humanitarian trends and political and military developments, providing context and analysis where necessary in order to facilitate informed discussion deeply rooted in the facts.

Executive Overview

UN Envoy Martin Griffiths met the Houthi and GPC-Sana'a leadership in Sana'a at the beginning and end of July, and met President Hadi and Prime Minister Bin Dagher in Aden on July 10. The Houthis said they would give the envoy "direct control" of Hodeidah port in exchange for a ceasefire in the governorate, while the Hadi government and coalition maintained their call for a full Houthi withdrawal from the city. Hadi formed a committee under Bin Dagher's supervision to consider the envoy's proposals and plan for potential direct talks with the Houthis, and Bin Dagher told the envoy in Riyadh on July 22 that the Houthis should release all prisoners in a show of good faith before any coming consultations.

Meanwhile, the "pause" in the military campaign to retake Hodeidah city, announced by the UAE's foreign minister on July 1, resulted in a reduction in hostilities in the city but fighting raged in several districts in Hodeidah. The Houthis' July 25 attack on a Saudi oil tanker, although not the first such attack, had several wider repercussions. Airstrikes on the city intensified following the attack, and Saudi Arabia suspended its oil shipments through the Bab Al-Mandeb straight, a move many see as an attempt to gain Western sympathies against the Houthis and by extension, Iran. On July 31, Higher Revolutionary Committee leader Mohammed Al-Houthi announced a unilateral cessation of all naval operations for two weeks starting August 1, although the circumstances and conditions of the move remained unclear.

Food and fuel imports arriving via Hodeidah fell far short of the quantity required to meet national needs, further increasing the possibility of famine and another cholera outbreak. A Norwegian Refugee Council spokesperson described Yemen as "sitting on a knife edge in terms of famine – it could tip at any time really," while the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen said "we could be one airstrike away from an unstoppable epidemic." Hodeidah is of special concern because it accounted for around 15 percent of the million-plus suspected cholera cases recorded since April 2017, and many of its residents remain at heightened risk due to the dilapidated sewage and water systems, and relatively high rates of malnutrition. As the battle for Hodeidah has already displaced over a quarter-million people, there are fears the city could become ground zero for another outbreak of the highly contagious disease.

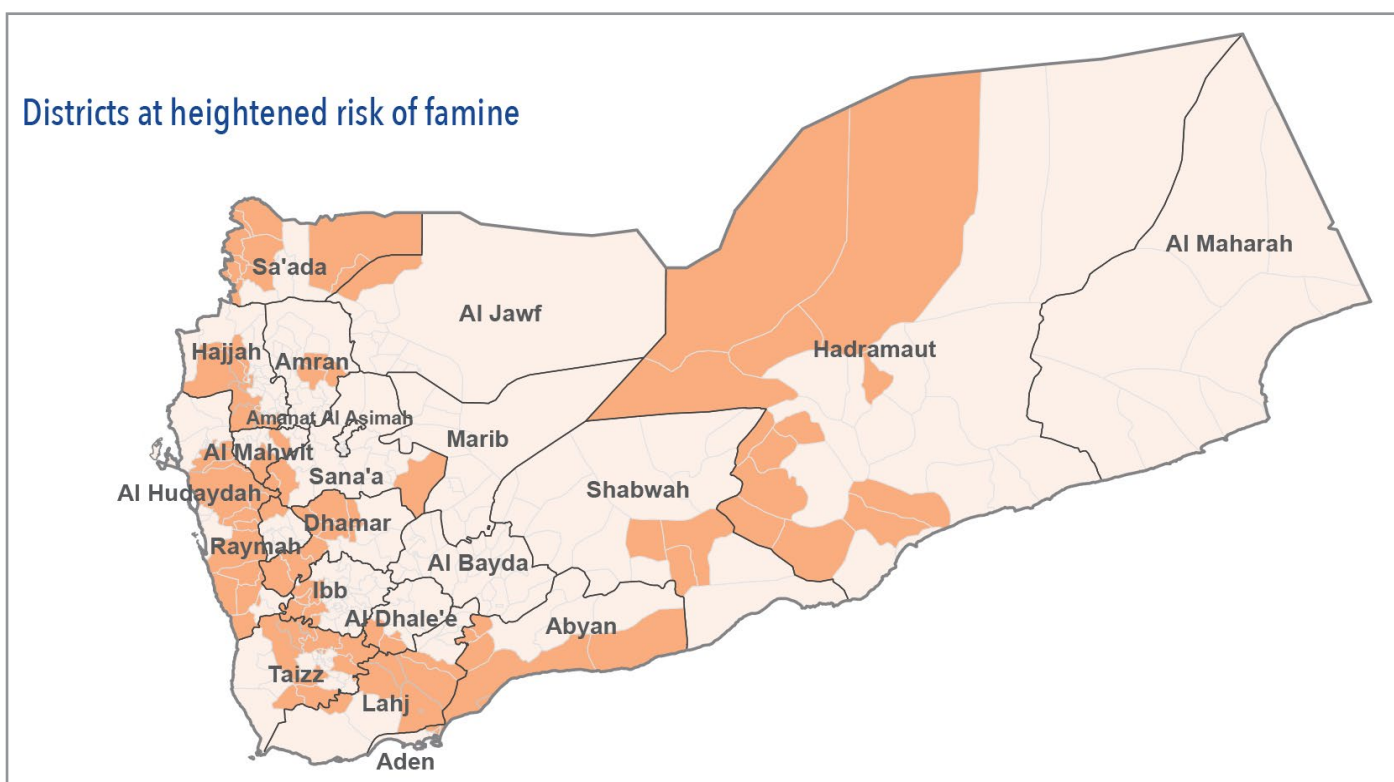
Timeline

- July 2-4** UN Envoy Martin Griffiths visits Sana'a
- Jul 10** Griffiths meets President Hadi and Prime Minister Bin Dagher in Aden
- Jul 25** Saudi Arabia suspends oil shipments through Bab Al-Mandeb after Houthi attack on tanker
- Jul 26** UN Envoy meets SPC head in Sana'a, his sixth visit to Yemen in under two months
- Jul 26** Houthis claim drone attack on Abu Dhabi airport, denied by Emirati authorities
- Jul 31** Houthis announce unilateral cessation of naval operations from August 1-15

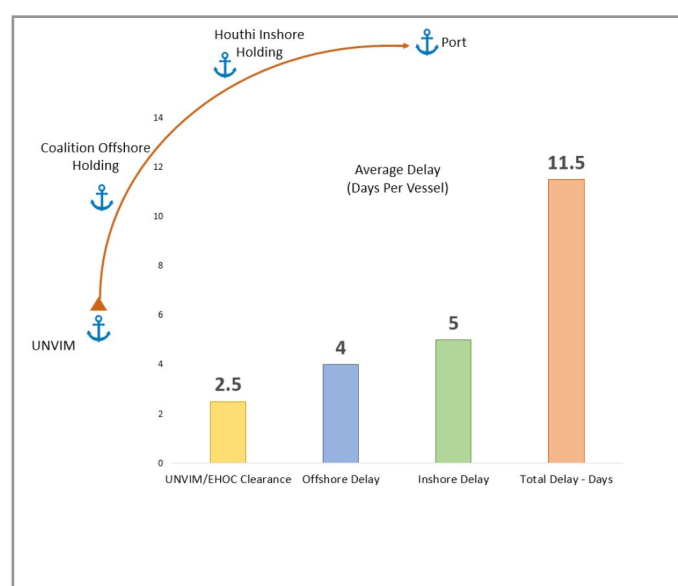
Humanitarian and Economic Trends

Imports through Hodeidah declined in July as fears grew of a heightened risk of famine. “In July we know that imports of food into Hodeidah met less than half of the food requirements for that month,” the International Rescue Committee (IRC) [said](#) in late July. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) had earlier [reported](#) that as of July 19 an estimated 16 percent of the fuel and 40 percent of the food required to meet needs had been imported through Hodeidah. “We perceive the country to be sitting on a knife edge in terms of famine – it could

tip at any time really,” NRC spokesperson Suze van Meegen [said](#). In June, imports through Hodeidah met 29 percent of the fuel and 82 percent of the national food requirements, [according](#) to OCHA. The month prior, 117 percent of national food requirements were met, while fuel remained low, at 28 percent. A total of 107 districts in Yemen are considered to be at heightened risk of famine (nearly a third of Yemen’s 333 districts), distributed according to the UN OCHA [map](#) below:



The price of staple food and fuel prices remained relatively stable in Hodeidah city and Sana'a, compared to May prices, despite the battle that began on June 13, [according](#) to the Famine Early Warnings Systems (FEWS) Network. However, “as worst affected households begin to exhaust their coping capacity, populations may begin to move into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) even in the absence of additional disruptions,” the food monitor warned. Relatedly, it is currently taking vessels an average of two weeks from when they request clearance from the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to when their cargo is offloaded in Hodeidah. UN OCHA [said](#) in July that based on statistics from UNVIM, “the average time has reduced significantly from three months ago, when the average delay was nearly one month.” UNVIM breaks down the delay as follows:



The risk of cholera transmission is currently heightened by seasonal factors and the west coast battle. “Conditions are ideal for cholera to spread rapidly in the hot summer months, with almost 3,000 suspected cases reported in the first week of July across the country – the highest number seen since the start of the year,” Save the Children [warned](#). Insufficient imports of fuel, coupled with military activity by both sides has reduced the operating capacity of the country’s sewage and water systems, leaving residents without access to clean water, open-air waste, and fewer resources to manage. Since the cholera epidemic started in April 2017, Hodeidah has registered the greatest incidence of suspected cases – 14 percent of the nationwide total – more than any other city or town in Yemen, [according](#) to the WHO. As a result of all of the above, this led Save the Children to warn Hodeidah “could become ground zero for a new outbreak of the highly contagious disease.”

“The Houthis’ preparations for urban fighting is further exacerbating the situation for civilians,” [according](#) to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which observed that Houthi fighters are damaging infrastructure by digging trenches. Coalition airstrikes, which hit a [water system](#) in Sa’ada and damaged a [health facility](#) in Hodeidah city, are also exacerbating the risk of further outbreak. Additionally, the fighting in Al-Tuhaita district of Hodeidah has caused “severe damage to the main water tanks,” leaving almost 100,000 people without clean water and more prone to contracting communicable diseases, [according](#) to Yemen’s Protection Cluster. In another district of Hodeidah, Al-Mighlaf, the number of new suspected cholera cases has increased by more than 110 percent between mid-May and mid-June. “Damage to sanitation, water and health facilities jeopardizes everything that we are trying to do... We could be one airstrike away from an unstoppable epidemic,” Humanitarian Coordinator Lise Grande [said](#).

“It is imperative for our aid teams to have unrestricted access to be able to help those in need. And it is vital that Hodeida port, which accounts for more than 70% of the imports in this country, is kept open. Even a 2-week closure would result in children dying as they are completely dependent on emergency food rations.”

Mohammed Zulqarnain Baloch, Islamic Relief country director ([source](#))

Hundreds of thousands have been displaced due to the fighting in Hodeidah. Into the sixth week of the battle for Hodeidah city, as of July 18 IOM [said](#) over a quarter-million individuals had been displaced. Though aid agencies do not always specify whether they are referring to the city or governorate, Save the Children [said](#) there are now an estimated 350,000 people in Hodeidah city and its outskirts, which is a quarter-million fewer than the estimate of 600,000 residents the city was widely reported to have been housing when the battle began. UN OCHA later [reported](#) that as of July 29 the total number of registered displaced households from Hodeidah governorate had reached 48,574, which based on the average 6.7 individuals per household amounts to over 325,000 IDPs.

The Houthi-controlled Saba News Agency [reported](#) on July 2 that the first mass transit bus returning displaced people from Sana’a back to Hodeidah departed, and that the Houthi-aligned local authorities in Hodeidah [called](#) on displaced families to return as life had returned to normal.

Saudi Arabia suspended oil shipments through Bab Al-Mandeb after an attack on one of its tankers. On July 25 one of two Saudi oil tankers transiting through the Red Sea sustained minimal damage, which was pinned on the Houthis. “Two Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), each with a two million barrels capacity, operated by the Saudi National Shipping Company, Bahri, and transporting Saudi Aramco crude oil were attacked by terrorist Houthi militia this morning in the Red Sea,” a [statement](#) by Saudi Aramco reads. Following the incident, Saudi Energy Minister Khaled Al-Falih [said](#) “Saudi Arabia is temporarily halting all oil shipments through Bab Al-Mandeb strait immediately until the situation becomes clearer and the maritime transit through Bab Al-Mandeb is safe.”

“Analysts say Saudi Arabia is trying to encourage its Western allies to take more seriously the danger posed by the Houthis and step up support for its war in Yemen,” Reuters [wrote](#). “The suspension of Saudi shipments – with the implied threat of higher oil prices – may also be aimed at pressuring European allies, who have continued to support the nuclear deal with Iran following the US withdrawal in May, to take a stronger stance against Tehran’s ballistic missiles program and support for armed

groups across the region." An estimated 500,000 to 700,000 barrels are exported by Saudi Arabia daily through the strait. A portion of Saudi oil will continue flowing to Europe and beyond, however, as a major oil pipeline connecting to the west coast city of Yanbu (which the Houthis have previously launched missiles at) bypasses the straight.

On July 26, the Logistics Cluster [announced](#) "Due to unforeseen circumstances, all Logistics Cluster sea operations, cargo and passengers, are suspended until further notice." It is unclear whether the move was related to the attack on the Saudi oil tanker and that country's decision to halt its oil shipments along Yemen's west coast.

The Yemeni riyal depreciated markedly throughout July. By the end of the month, the rate was [reportedly](#) at around \$1 to YER 522 in Aden, where the internationally recognized government's Central Bank has been located since 2016, and \$1 to YER 515 in Sana'a. In an effort to prevent further deterioration, the Central Bank of Aden [announced](#) on July 31 its board of directors agreed to make the first withdrawal from Saudi Arabia's earlier \$2 billion deposit, allocating \$20,428,000 to cover the foreign currency needed for the import of basic food commodities, in addition to approving the issuing of government bonds as well as Wakala deposits for Islamic banks. The board of directors also endorsed improved oversight and security in the banking sector, including inspections of money exchangers. Immediately following the Bank's announcement, it was [reported](#) that 25 unlicensed currency exchange shops in Aden were closed by the security forces.

Political Developments

The UN envoy made three trips to Yemen and Hadi formed a committee to consider his proposals, but no major decisions were announced in July regarding the resumption of talks between the warring parties. Griffiths arrived in Sana'a on July 2, and gave a statement to the press at Sana'a airport upon his July 4 departure. The envoy [said](#) he met with leaders and representatives of the Houthis and Sana'a-based General People's Congress (GPC), including Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, GPC head Sadeq Ameen Abu Ras, and Hisham Sharaf, the Sana'a-based foreign minister. On July 26 the Supreme Political Council head met again with Griffiths in Sana'a, and Saba News [reported](#)

"the meeting dealt with the aspects related to the coming Geneva consultations," indicating there is a plan to meet in Geneva (note: on August 2, Griffiths [announced](#) talks are to be held in Geneva starting September 6).

Griffiths met President Hadi and Prime Minister Ahmed Bin Dagher in Aden on [July 10](#). "We held a fruitful meeting with His Excellency the President and we focused on the humanitarian aspects throughout Yemen, and talked about the release of all captured and detainees by all sides," the envoy was [quoted](#) as saying. At the same time, President Hadi formed a committee under Bin Dagher's supervision to consider any proposals the envoy puts forth and to prepare for potential direct talks with the Houthis. A government official [said](#) the committee aims "to crystallize the discussion topics before going to direct talks with the Houthis." On July 22 Bin Dagher met with Griffiths in Riyadh. [According](#) to his media, Bin Dagher "stressed the necessity of demonstrating good faith prior to the beginning of any coming consultations through releasing all prisoners and detainees from Houthi prisons, and easing the arrival of aid and humanitarian relief to all those affected in all the country's governorates."

Background on the peace process

Martin Griffiths assumed his role as Special Envoy in March 2018. He met President Hadi in Riyadh that month, and visited Sana'a on March 24 for a week-long trip. In April, Griffiths told the UN Security Council he planned to provide a "framework for negotiations" within two months. Though not made public, the envoy's framework for peace negotiations appears to build largely on the work of his predecessor, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, in terms of a phased Houthi military withdrawal alongside the group's political inclusion in a unity government. In June, Griffiths travelled to Sana'a twice and met president Hadi in Aden. The Houthis voiced agreement to UN supervision of the port dependent on a ceasefire in the governorate, while the Hadi government and UAE maintained their demand for a full withdrawal from Hodeidah city and port. "I'd like to get the parties together within the next few weeks, at the very latest," he said during an [interview](#) with the UN News Center on June 28,

The increased pace of the operation along the coast of Hodeidah forced the envoy to focus his efforts there, while attempting to connect any peacebuilding progress to the national-level conflict. His plan for

Hodeidah has also not been published, but as the Atlantic [reported](#): “The details include a phased Houthi withdrawal from Hodeidah’s port and city, along with two other nearby ports. The UN would help Yemeni staff run the port facility, and would also assist local government and police in managing the city. Because these local personnel have remained largely neutral during the war in Yemen, they ought to be acceptable to all sides. In return, UAE-backed forces would gradually pull back from the city. The deal would be tied to a broader national ceasefire, and a return to peace talks after a two-year hiatus.”

See the [June 2018 issue](#) of the *Yemen Trend* for more background on the UN-sponsored peace process.

The Houthis said they would give “direct control” of Hodeidah port to the UN, but will not cede control of the city. In an exclusive [interview](#) with French paper Le Figaro, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi said that “since the days of Ismail Ould Cheikh as UN envoy, we are not rejecting the role of supervision and logistics of the United Nations in the port, but on the condition that the aggression against Hodeidah stops.” The Houthi leader said he does not oppose the collection of port revenues and revenues from oil and gas in Marib, Shabwa and Hadramout governorates for the purpose of paying public salaries. He stressed this should be done under UN supervision, and that “salaries of free areas that are not occupied by Saudi Arabia and the UAE be paid from Sana’a.” When asked about the envoy’s initiative, Al-Houthi said it relates “to the port in terms of the transfer of direct control to him,” and that the Houthis are “interested in his initiative, not the UAE demands and its ambitions,” in reference to the UAE’s demand for a complete Houthi withdrawal. The full text of the interview was [published](#) by the Houthi-run Saba News.

On the other hand, Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yemany alleged the Houthis are using the UN envoy’s efforts to “buy time” and further entrench themselves in Hodeidah city. The foreign minister reaffirmed the Hadi government and coalition demand a full withdrawal from the city. “If they just withdraw from the seaport it’s meaningless, they will be within 1 kilometer of the seaport and it will be a clashing point to disrupt all efforts,” he [said](#). “So, we say the full withdrawal from Hodeidah is a prerequisite for any successful outcome for these efforts.” The day before those remarks, on July 23 the Yemen embassy in Washington [Tweeted](#) “Yemen

FM: The Government is dealing positively with and has agreed, in principle, to the initiative of the UN Envoy on Hodeidah as a package deal and has also submitted its comments on it to the Envoy.”

Military and Security Developments

The Houthis announced a unilateral two-week cessation of naval operations, subject to be extended and to expand nationwide should the Hadi government and coalition take a similar step. [According](#) to the Sana’a-based Saba news, the announcement was made on July 31 by the Higher Revolutionary Committee president, Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi. He [Tweeted](#) the ceasefire would go into effect starting at midnight on August 1 until the same time on August 15. Mohammed Al-Houthi also led the [previous initiative](#) the Houthis proposed in February 2018. The Higher Revolutionary Committee is a Houthi body, in contrast to the ruling Supreme Political Council, which formally governs in partnership with the Sana’a-based General People’s Congress (GPC-Sana’a). Al-Houthis’ role is also notable in that it sidesteps Mohammed Abdulsalam, who leads the Houthis’ official delegation for the peace process.

The battle for Hodeidah city remained stalled, but airstrikes picked up in late July and heavy clashes south of the city continued uninterrupted. On July 1, UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash [said](#) his country would continue exerting pressure on the perimeter of the city, but that the coalition “has paused the advance on the city & port on June 23 for a week to allow the UN envoy to secure an unconditional withdrawal from Hodeidah.” Since around June 22 humanitarian and news sources reported a slowed pace of fighting around the city, although airstrikes did not completely stop. On July 9, Reuters [reported](#) the coalition had made no recent gains in Hodeidah city, “leaving it without the decisive increase in leverage it had sought against the group in UN-sponsored peace efforts.” Despite repeated claims by anti-Houthi forces that Hodeidah airport was captured around June 19-20, military and aid sources told Reuters the roughly 20km area surrounding the main airport building was not under their full control yet.

Heavy airstrikes resumed on Hodeidah city following the Houthis' July 25 attack on a Saudi oil tanker. Reuters [called](#) the increase in airstrikes "an apparent resumption of military operations," although the air campaign had not previously come to a full stop and the tempo of ground operations did not appear to change significantly in the ensuing days. Meanwhile, south of the port city the districts of Al-Tuhaita, Bayt Al-Faqih, and Zabid were the sight of ongoing clashes, with Al-Tuhaita being an especially high-intensity conflict, [according](#) to WHO.

Background: The west coast offensive

The operation to retake Hodeidah city began on June 13, and centered around Hodeidah airport, given its location between the anti-Houthi forces and the city center. The capture of the airport was – and remains – disputed, but UAE-led forces are believed to have captured the main building by June 20. After the airport was mostly secured, the frontline did not advance farther into the city proper. "We don't want to move farther than the airport," UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash was [quoted](#) as saying late on June 19. "The smart thing is to push hard on the perimeter, not enter the city, and say to the UN, 'Go back and get a better deal,'" he said. Fighting in several southern districts has remained steady, however, as the Houthis attempt to cut off supply lines along the main coastal road, and UAE-led forces seek to weaken the Houthis' grasp on the parallel interior road.

The effort to retake Hodeidah port was first put in motion in December 2016, when UAE-led forces began pushing up the coast of Taiz governorate. In January 2017 the Houthi/Saleh alliance lost control of much of Dhubab and Mocha, the two coastal districts of Taiz. After months of fighting in those districts, by the summer of 2017 the offensive appeared to have lost steam, likely due in part to the mounting feud between President Hadi and the UAE in the south. However, after Ali Abdullah Saleh was killed in December 2017, UAE-led forces made their first incursion into Hodeidah governorate, and when Saleh's nephew Tareq appeared in the south the following month, the UAE began forming an armed group under Tareq's leadership. Moderate progress northward by the Al-Amalika (Giants) Brigades, the Tehama Resistance, and the militaries of the UAE and Sudan was sped up in May 2017 after Tareq's National Resistance Forces moved from Taiz into Hodeidah.

The Houthis claimed unconfirmed drone attacks in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Aden, and the group maintained the tempo of its ballistic missile launches against Saudi Arabia. Several major developments related to the Houthis' missile and air forces occurred throughout July:

- On July 18 the Houthis [claimed](#) to have targeted a Saudi Aramco oil facility in Riyadh, [adding](#) the same day that the attack was carried out by the newly unveiled "long-range Sammad-2 combat drone." [According](#) to Reuters, Saudi Aramco had announced a minor fire had taken place at the refinery that day, but that is was the result of "an operation incident."
- On July 26 the Houthis [claimed](#) to have "waged three raids on Abu Dhabi International Airport" using a drone. Airport authorities [said](#) via Twitter "there has been an incident involving a supply vehicle" but the UAE denied an attack had occurred. Relatedly, on the west coast of Yemen, the UAE [said](#) it shot down two "Iranian Qasef-1 drones belonging to the Houthis."
- The coalition shot down what they described as an Iranian-made Houthi drone in Aden on July 5. Xinhua [reported](#) a security source said the drone managed to fire two missiles at the coalition headquarters in Buraiqa district.
- Speaking at a press conference, coalition spokesman Turki Al-Malki [said](#) that between the coalition's intervention and July 16, 2018, a total of 161 ballistic missiles had been fired toward Saudi Arabia, out of a total 66,339 projectiles. This figure includes several missiles fired during the first half of July.
- Video released by the Houthis was [said](#) to be of a drone dropping grenade-sized bombs around 45km south of Hodeidah city. Though unverified, this would mark the first known time the Houthis have conducted air-to-surface bombings since March 2015.

The Houthis' relations with foreign Shia paramilitary groups came under closer scrutiny, after Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah and the leader of an Iraqi militia close to Iran made speeches in support of the Houthis. On July 7, Abu Waala Al-Wa'eli, leader of the Sayyid Al-Shuhada Battalions, an Iraqi Shi'a militia with close links to Iran, [said](#) "I declare I am a soldier standing at the signal of Sayyid Abdulmalik Al-Houthi... I announce the Sayyid Al-Shuhada Battalions are a faction among your factions O' Ansar Allah [Houthis]. This came a

little over a week after Nasrallah told the Houthis “I wish I could be one of your fighters and fight under the guidance of your brave and dear leaders.” [According](#) to the Long War Journal, in a July 8 speech Abdulmalik Al-Houthi expressed thanks to “the master of the resistance and the jihad of God’s promise and a man of loyalty and great honor, Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah.” He ended his speech by expressing his “appreciation for the free and loyal people of Iraq, who declared their position of solidarity with the people of Yemen,” in clear reference to Al-Wa’eli’s speech. In response to Nasrallah’s speech, Yemeni Foreign Minister Al-Yamani [wrote](#) a letter of complaint to his Lebanese counterpart.

Relatedly, in a confidential new report, [according](#) to AFP the UN panel of experts on Yemen says it “continues to believe” ballistic missiles, drones, and other weapons being used by the Houthis “show characteristics similar to weapons systems known to be produced in the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

President Hadi called for a joint security operations room to be established in Aden, during a [meeting](#) with Interior Minister Ahmed Al-Misari and a number of senior Yemen, Saudi, and Emirati military and security officials in the interim capital. Hadi’s continued presence in Aden and relative lack of public push-back from UAE-supported security and separatist factions lends further support to the notion that the president and the UAE reached a common understanding during the president’s visit to the UAE the month prior.

Frequent assassinations and small-scale attacks continued in Aden, despite relative calm at the leadership level between the Hadi government, UAE, and UAE-aligned separatists. In an [article](#) about the recurrent assassinations, Chinese state media Xinhua said that while “terrorist” groups are often immediately blamed, many in Aden view these attacks as part of the ongoing struggle for influence between UAE-supported groups on the one hand and the Islah Party and other Qatar-supported groups on the other. “The prominent allies of Qatar, including the Islamic Islah party, are carrying out these armed attacks in a desperate way to fight the UAE presence in Aden and make it unstable,” a member of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) is quoted as saying. On the other side, an Islah member said “the UAE-backed military

leaders are ruling Aden and have the upper hand there, but they are using Qatar intervention as a pretext to hide their failure in management and fighting terrorism.” Some of the main incidents that took place in July include:

- [July 3](#): a police station commander was killed by gunmen riding a motorcycle
- [July 19](#): a Criminal Investigation Department official was similarly shot dead
- [July 22](#): Mohammed Ragheb, an imam affiliated with the Islah Party, was killed
- [July 24](#): an explosive device killed four near a checkpoint as a military vehicle carrying a high-ranking security official was targeted, injuring him and several others.
- [July 30](#): a colonel and former intelligence officer was assassinated in front of his house
- [July 31](#): a roadside bombing injured a leading Islahi politician, his son and two others

Relatedly, in a new report titled “God only knows if he’s alive” ([summary](#); [full](#)), Amnesty International casts doubt on the large number of arrests made in the name of fighting terrorism. Based on interviews with current and former detainees, their families, and relevant authorities and experts, the report states UAE troops and the local security forces they sponsor, who operate outside the authority of the Ministry of Interior, “have been widely implicated in egregious detention-related violations, including enforced disappearance and torture,” in addition to sexual violence and in some cases, death. “Among those targeted have been former fighters who fought in the 2015 battles to rout the Houthis from the south and who are now seen as a threat; sympathizers and members of the Hadi-aligned Islah Party, Yemen’s Muslim Brotherhood branch; as well as activists and critics of the coalition,” the report says.

The US government is to increase oversight concerning its involvement in the war, and the conduct of its allies. The [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019](#) contains two relevant amendments advanced by congressional leadership:

- **Section 1274**: This states that the Secretary of Defense is to “conduct a review to determine whether the [American] Armed Forces or coalition partners of the United States violated Federal law, the laws of armed conflict, or

Department of Defense policy while conducting operations in Yemen.” This includes a review of possible US participation in interrogations, and an unclassified report is to be submitted to Congress.

- **Section 1290:** This states that if the Secretary of Defense does not “certify that the Government of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the United Arab Emirates are undertaking the effort, measures, and actions described [to improve targeting conduct]... no Federal funds may be obligated or expended after the deadline for the applicable certification to provide authorized in-flight refueling.” This amendment applies to refueling for aircraft conducting standard strikes and surveillance on the Houthis, and does not apply to activities deemed to be related to counter-terrorism or for immediate protection of US interests and its allies.

Recommended reading and viewing:

- PBS NewsHour released a 3-part documentary, shot in Houthi-controlled northern Yemen, covering the [hunger crisis](#), [American support](#) for the coalition, and the Houthis’ alleged [links to Iran](#).
- [“Another critical oil checkpoint is in the firing line after Iranian general’s threat”](#) is an article by CNBC that raises the possibility of US direct involvement in the military confrontation with the Houthis as Iranian generals act on their threats to disrupt crude shipments in the Red Sea. The author argues that the Houthis attacks on the red sea are part of an Iranian strategy for escalation with the US as the latter proceeds with its oil sanctions against Tehran.
- Arguing the Emirates’ counter-terrorism activities in southern Yemen are increasingly driven by its investment in energy resources and maritime trade, this piece in the Cairo Review looks at [The UAE’s Security-Economic Nexus in Yemen](#).
- A short article by the Washington Institute tackles [The Problem of Landmine Proliferation in Yemen](#), arguing that “Washington should continue to financially support de-mining operations, call for a new landmine impact survey, and help ensure landmine removal continues to be prioritized even as other urgent challenges arise in the war’s aftermath.”
- [After 22 died at a wedding, one village asks, ‘Why us?’](#) A Washington Post correspondent travels to Hajjah governorate and writes of the follow-up after a deadly coalition airstrike.
- UAE minister of state for international cooperation, Reem Al Hashimy, concluded a visit to Washington DC. She participated in a [conversation with UAE ambassador to the US, Yousef Al Otaiba, at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington](#) to discuss the UAE’s role in the conflict in Yemen and their efforts in the military confrontations in the port city of Hodeidah.
- The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) released several briefs in July, including on the increasing number of attacks in [The Saudi-Yemeni Border Conflict](#); the decline in activity by [The Islamic State in Yemen](#) over the last few months; and a break-down of the [UAE-backed Forces Fighting on the Western Front in Yemen](#).
- From Sana’a, reporter Jane Ferguson asks [Is Intentional Starvation the Future of War?](#)



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