



REPORT

Chapters from Hell

Violations of the International Humanitarian Law
in the Armed Ground Conflict in Taiz



Mwatana for Human Rights

November 2016 - Yemen
www.mwatana.org



August 28, 2016, shells falling on a residential neighborhood in Thabaat area, Salh district, city of Taiz.

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Background on the Situation in Yemen



In the last five years since the beginning of the year 2011, Yemen has witnessed drastic political transformations that led to a change in the political scene and its actors that reached their tools, priorities, alliances, speeches, and work mechanisms. Political work receded in favor of military action, and the military institution became divided between the different parties to the conflict. Ansar Allah armed group (Houthis), seized the capital city of Sana'a on 21 September 2014 and other parts of the country. Almost four months later on 20 January 2015, they put President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi and Prime Minister Khaled Mahfouz Bahah and most of the cabinet under house arrest.

After around a month of house arrest in his residence in the capital Sana'a, President Hadi was able to escape to Aden city on 21 February 2015. By then, Ansar Allah (Houthis) had forced control over most of the northern governorates, and started preparing their fighters to head south, to Aden. President Hadi had announced Aden as a 'temporary capital', mainly after the embassies and diplomatic missions have departed the capital, Sana'a.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) were able to, in alliance with the Armed Forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, gain control over the city of Aden by force. This coincided with increasing tensions in the governorate of Taiz that is geographically located on the way to Aden from the north. The battles continued on the outskirts of the southern governorates of Shabwa and Abyan, however, President Hadi was able to flee to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on 25 March 2015.

Hours after President Hadi fled to Riyadh, warplanes of a coalition of nine Arab countries, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, carried out intense raids against Ansar Allah (Houthis) and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The early morning of Thursday, March 26, 2015 was the beginning of a wide range war that impacted all governorates of Yemen and has not stopped until today.

The war reorganized local powers between the parties to the conflict according to new givens under worsening humanitarian crisis and a terrifying economic downturn. Consequently, armed groups became more powerful in light of the almost total absence of the State agencies and institutions. Public rights and civil activity receded, and most of the media in the country closed. The country was effectively divided into two parts: one under the control of the de facto authority,

represented by the alliance between Ansar Allah and Saleh and managed from Sana'a, and the other under the authority of President Hadi and his government, managed, nominally, from Aden (as the temporary capital), but actually from the Saudi capital, Riyadh, where President Hadi and the pillars of his government reside.

The events of the year 2011, known as 'Arab Spring', demanded the removal of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh from power. Saleh is the longest-serving President in the history of Modern Yemen ruling for 33 years. The events of 2011 led to fallouts that resulted in the regional and international communities' intervention to sponsor difficult negotiations between the stakeholders. These negotiations resulted in a settlement agreement known as the 'GCC Initiative'⁽¹⁾. The goal of the initiative was to resolve the crisis between Yemeni stakeholders who had formed two large alliances, one included the parties that were demanding the removal of Saleh's regime (the Joint Meeting Parties and its partners), and the other alliance included the parties that supported the regime (the General People's Congress and its allies). The GCC Initiative was signed on 23 November 2011 in the Saudi capital Riyadh, since Saudi Arabia was the prominent sponsor of the initiative. Based on the content of the Initiative, former President Saleh was removed and his Vice President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi was made President as a consensual alternative. Hadi was elected on 21 February 2012. He was the only candidate in the elections based on an agreement that he would rule for the transitional period that starts with the formation of a national consensus government that is made up of the parties that had signed the GCC Initiative, and ends with presidential election of a new president for the country within 2 years. Furthermore, the settlement agreement included holding a comprehensive national dialogue and drafting a new constitution that reflects the outcomes of the dialogue, followed by a constitutional referendum and organizing general elections in accordance with the implementation mechanism of the GCC Initiative.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) were the most prominent group that was absent from the signing of the GCC Initiative, however, they joined the initiative's political process as a primary participant in the National Dialogue Conference. The armed group joined the political process, starting from the preparations period for the National Dialogue Conference until the implementation during the period from March 2013 until January 2014.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) was publically formed in the beginning of the second millennium by Hussein Badreddin Al Houthi, a former Parliament Member and the son of a Zaidi religious scholar, Badreddin Al Houthi. The group went through many developments since the 1980s, when it started its educational and social activities through what was then known as the Believing Youth movement. Their name was changed to the 'Believing Youth Organization' in the 1990s, until its emergence as an armed group in 2004. After that, the group was known as the Houthis because of its leader, Hussein Badreddin Al Houthi. It called itself Ansar Allah when it began to participate in the political process in the National Dialogue Conference in the beginning of 2013. Its formation was based on a revival of the Zaidi sect, which is a sect of Shiite Islam that has many adherents in Yemen. The founder focused the activities of his group in the governorate of Sa'dah because it is the spring of Zaidism in Yemen, and he started working against what he considered to be efforts

(1) The complete text of the timetable and implementation mechanism of the GCC Initiative, Al Motamar Net <http://www.almotamar.net/news/95152.htm> (visited on 15 October 2016) [English Translation: http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_111205_Agreement%20on%20the%20implementation%20mechanism%20for%20the%20transition.pdf]

to change the religious identity of the governorate by Sunni groups.

Before 2011, Ansar Allah (Houthis) fought in six stages of armed conflict against the army and the government under the regime of the then President Ali Abdullah Saleh. These conflicts were known as the ‘Six Sa’dah Wars’. They started in the beginning of 2004, and the last war ended in 11 February 2010, with the group remaining in power in some of the districts of the governorate of Sa’dah. This situation continued until the government lost power in the governorate because of the political conflict in Sana’a in the beginning of 2011, and the Houthis spread their control by force on the whole governorate.

In November 2011, the GCC Initiative stopped the signs of an armed conflict between Saleh’s regime and its opponents. Yemenis looked forward to a new beginning of peaceful change in their country, but the political transition process faced political and security problems since 2012. A number of armed conflicts erupted, consistently involving Ansar Allah (Houthis) on one side; and tribal powers, Salafi fighters, and other groups associated with Yemeni Congregation for Reform (the Islah Party) on the other side. Islah Party is considered the most prominent representative of political Sunni Islam and the traditional ideological opponent of Ansar Allah (Houthis). The conflicts were mainly in the governorates of Sa’dah and Amran in northern Yemen, resuming an armed conflict that started in October 2011, a month before the signing of the GCC Initiative. This conflict continued intermittently with the Salafis of Dammaj that is administratively located in Sa’dah governorate, and ended with a truce between the two sides, and the agreement led to the displacement of the Salafi groups from Dammaj on 15 January 2014. The displaced were distributed among different governorates and areas in Yemen, and this is considered the first mass displacement in Yemen’s modern history.

Following that, a conflict developed between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Al Ahmar Sheikhs, allies of Islah Party, and the combat operations and locations expanded to the governorate of Amran, leading to the fall of the powerful tribe of Hashid in the hands of Ansar Allah (Houthis) in February 2014. This was a symbolic victory for Ansar Allah (Houthis), where they defeated the strongest and most influential tribe in Yemen in their seat of power. This encouraged them to go into an armed conflict with the 310th Brigade in the capital of the governorate of Amran (50 kilometers to the north of the capital, Sana’a) and were able to take over the headquarters of the Brigade’s leadership and kill Brigadier Gen. Hameed Al Qushaibi, the Head of the Brigade. Simultaneously, they took over the center of Amran governorate in July 2014.

The governorate of Amran is considered the northern entrance to the Yemeni capital Sana’a, and it was the launching ground for Ansar Allah’s (Houthis) campaign to take over the capital, Sana’a, by force in September 2014.

Following the takeover of the capital Sana’a by Ansar Allah (Houthis) on the 21 September of 2014, and signing the Peace and National Partnership Agreement with the other political groups under international sponsorship, Ansar Allah placed President Hadi, the Prime Minister at the time, Khaled Mahfouz Bahah and members of his cabinet under house arrest on 20 January 2015 after weeks of tension.

Afterwards, President Hadi escaped the house arrest to the city of Aden on 21 March 2015. A group of Ansar Allah’s (Houthis) fighters and military units loyal to their ally, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, advanced to the governorate of Taiz and the city of Aden in the south of Yemen, in addition to other Yemeni areas and governorates.

This advance for Ansar Allah and their ally Saleh marked the start of a new level of violent conflict. Yemeni Air Force, which had come under the control of Ansar Allah, bombed the Presidential Palace in Aden that was Hadi's headquarter and therefore he escaped to the Saudi capital, Riyadh. After that, armed local 'resistance' groups were formed primarily from members of the Islah Party, Salafi groups, the Southern Movement, and Jihadi groups, in addition to government forces and other political parties loyal to President Hadi.

In the early morning of Thursday, March 26, 2015, following President Hadi's escape to Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign heading an Arab Coalition of nine Arab countries against Ansar Allah (Houthis) and their ally, Saleh, in response to the request that President Hadi had submitted to the Gulf Cooperative Council to enable him to restore his power and reinstall his legitimacy. The military intervention was called Operation Decisive Storm, and all of the government officials from the transitional period resettled in Riyadh. Days after the beginning of these operations, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 2216, which placed Yemen under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and the country began to witness wide-range battles between the two sides, one of them represented by the alliance between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and former President Saleh, and the other represented by President Hadi's authority, supported by the Saudi-led Arab Coalition. This coincided with wide range deterioration in the humanitarian situation due to the development of the armed conflict and increasing regional and sectarian tensions between the different components of Yemeni society due to the acute polarization caused by the war.

The United Nations expends wide efforts in sponsoring peace talks between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the General People's Congress⁽²⁾ on one side, and Hadi's government and his allies on the other side. In June 2015, the first round of the talks between the two sides started in Geneva, and was followed by another session in the city of Biel in Switzerland in what was called Geneva 2 talks. After that, came the Kuwait Talks from April to June 2016, which resumed for two weeks during July, before ending. These rounds of negotiations were devoted to reaching a peace agreement between the parties to the conflict, but the negotiations have not reached a promising peace agreement until the release of this report.

In light of the stumbled negotiation course, Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the General People's Congress announced In August 2016 the formation of a joint Supreme Political Council⁽³⁾ that includes members from both groups. Members of parliament who are affiliated with or supporters of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the General People's Congress, held a parliamentary session in support of the formation of the council and was regarded as the highest authority in the country. Marchers were gathered to the capital Sana'a to support the council.⁽⁴⁾ That coincide in time with the return of the Saudi-led Arab Coalition bombing campaign of Sana'a and other parts of Yemen which have had stopped during the Kuwait Talks.

(2) The political party that has been headed by Ali Abdullah Saleh since the announcement of political pluralism in Yemen after the Unification of Yemen in 1990.

(3) The Republican Palace in Sana'a Witnesses the Handover of Authority Between the Supreme Revolutionary Committee and the Supreme Political Council, Yemeni News Agency Website (Saba), the version managed by Ansar Allah (Houthis) <http://www.saba.ye/ar/news436973.htm> (visited on 15 October 2016)

(4) A Million Man March Confirms Its Blessings of the National Agreement, and Their Support of the Supreme Political Council, Yemeni News Agency Website (Saba), the version managed by Ansar Allah (Houthis) <http://www.saba.ye/ar/news437571.htm> (visited on 15 October 2016)

Overview of the Conflict in the Governorate of Taiz

The governorate of Taiz - at the heart of Yemen- was not absent from the conflicts' map that had spread throughout the different areas of Yemen between Ansar Allah (Houthi) militants and allied forces of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the one side, and what came to be known as the 'Popular Resistance' and the army loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi on the other side.

The governorate of Taiz is located to the south of the capital Sana'a, about 256 kilometers away. It has the highest population number and density; and make up 12.2% of the total population of the Republic of Yemen. It is administratively divided into 23 districts. The city of Taiz, which is surrounded by Sabir Mountain, is the capital of the governorate.⁽⁵⁾ The area of the governorate of Taiz is 10,008 kilometers², bordered on the south by the governorates of Lahj and Dhale; Ibb governorate on the north and Al-Hudaydah governorate on the west.⁽⁶⁾

The governorate of Taiz became one of the most important frontlines in the fighting between the two parties to the conflict. The fighting was mostly concentrated in the capital of the governorate and some of its suburbs. Fighting started with sporadic clashes at the end of March 2015, after Ansar Allah (Houthis) sent military reinforcements to the Special Forces base (previously the Central Security Organization) in Taiz. The reinforcements caused the people of Taiz to go out in peaceful protests against their presence in their city and also against sending the militants to Aden. The local government, represented by the governor, rejected any change in the military and security situation in the governorate and any forces or fighters brought from outside the governorate. The peaceful protests were suppressed, and Mwatana Organization⁽⁷⁾ documented on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, attacks by armed men belonging to Ansar Allah (Houthis) and

(5) Comprehensive Guide, Introduction to the Governorate of Taiz, <http://www.yemenna.com/?go=guide&op=show&link=taiz> (visited on 15 October 2016)

(6) The website of the government information center for the governorate of Taiz, <http://www.taizgov.com/new/2014-04-14-08-56-05/2014-04-17-07-47-14.html> (visited on 2 November 2016)

(7) Armed Men Belonging to Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Members of the Special Security Forces Kill 8 Protestors in Taiz and Injure More than 100 Others, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights, <http://www.mwatana.org/en/842015396>, (visited on 15 October 2016)

members of the Special Security Forces (Central Security Organization) on two separate protests in the governorate of Taiz. The attacks caused the death of at least 8 protesters and injured around 108, 13 of whom with serious injuries. The governor subsequently stepped down from his duties due to the military tension, and the rejection and lack of responsiveness to his efforts to mitigate the situation. The situation afterward did not take long to explode into open battles.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) took control of most of the military bases in the city, and enforced their control upon the city. In return, military operations against the group started, and they were carried out by groups that have been called, since that time, the ‘Resistance’. The Resistance in Taiz was formed, in the beginning, of some military units loyal to President Hadi, in addition to political and tribal militias loyal to the Yemeni Congregation for Reform, Islah. One of the most prominent leaders of these militias is the tribal sheikh, Hamood Saeed Al Mikhlaifi, who fought in an armed conflict in 2011 against the army during the popular protests calling for the removal of President Saleh from power.

The opposing sides of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and their ally Saleh, expanded to include Salafi and Jihadist groups, in addition to activists from other political parties, mainly from the Socialist Party and the Nasserite Organization. Ansar Allah (Houthis) and former President Saleh were joined by loyal individuals and groups from the governorate. Thus, the governorate in general, and the city of Taiz in particular, witnessed a violent military conflict that dangerously complicated the humanitarian, human rights, and security situations. The conflict, at times, turned into fighting from street to street in a number of neighborhoods in the city. In the middle of August 2015, the situation reached a point where the fighters of the Popular Resistance were able to take control of the city and force Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh’s fighters out of most of the city’s neighborhoods. The fighters from the groups and forces loyal to Saleh were able to hold and stay in control of all of the areas surrounding the city, and all of the entrances to the city. They imposed a blockade on the city, and this has caused humanitarian repercussions for the civilians,⁽⁸⁾ like the absence of basic goods and water, and the collapse of all healthcare services in the city.⁽⁹⁾

The map of the conflict in Taiz never kept the same form. In the middle of March 2016, 8 months after the beginning of the conflict, and with the support of fighter jets of the Saudi-led Coalition, forces loyal to President Hadi and the different resistance groups were able to partially break the blockade in the southwest and take control of a number of strategic locations, including the base of the 35th Armored Brigade.⁽¹⁰⁾ One week after they took control, Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh’s fighters returned to close the southwestern entrance to the city. The two conflicted parties are gaining and losing control of this entrance and other locations, until today.

In the eastern part of the city of Taiz, the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh stretches from the Republican Palace and part of the Kalabah Neighborhood, to the area of Al Hawban, where more than 4 military bases are located, the most important of which is the base of the 22nd Mechanized Brigade (previously the Republican Guard), which is loyal to Saleh. This base is in

(8) The Blockade Delivers the Deathblow to the Last Breath in Taiz, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights <http://www.mwatana.org/en/16102015436> (last visited on 15 October 2016)

(9) Taiz: The Continuing Suffocating Blockade Robs Civilians of the Medical Services that Remain, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights <http://www.mwatana.org/en/13112015440> (last visited on 15 October 2016).

(10) 35th Armored Brigade (Yemen), Wikipedia (Arabic) https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/الوحدات_35_عزم_الوحدات (last visited on 15 October 2016).

the area of Al Janad in the eastern part of the city.

As for the northern part of Taiz bordering the governorate of Ibb, Hadi's forces and the Popular Resistance control the areas close to the city, while all of the northern areas are under the control of the group of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh. The group controls the most important entrance that links the northern part of the city with the west, which is the 60 Street. It stretches from 'Mafrag Al Dhakarah' from Ibb in the north to the area of 'Al Rabee'i' in western Taiz. The entrance is a strategic location, and it is where reinforcements for Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh alliance cross when coming from the governorates of Ibb and Dhamar.

The conflict and constant fighting between the two sides that continued for more than a year and a half, have led to dangerous complications and violations on different levels that reached humanitarian needs, human rights, and security, in a governorate whose different parts are under the control of numerous armed groups and military units. Among the most visible of these violations is the number of civilian casualties due to the indiscriminate shelling, in addition to the airstrikes of the Saudi-led Arab Coalition.⁽¹¹⁾ The violations have included attacks on hospitals, healthcare centers and crews and relief organizations; the looting of humanitarian aid supplies; summary executions, targeting and using schools for military purposes, besieging areas and denying food and medical aid access; and the recruitment of child soldiers.

The scope of the military clashes expanded to include other cities and towns in the governorate, especially in the western part, which overlooks the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the city of Mocha, in addition to the rural areas bordering the governorates of Lahj and Dhale to the east of the city of Taiz, and the villages of Sabir Mountain and Silw. This situation has caused the scope of the daily suffering of civilians to expand to different parts of the governorate of Taiz.

In general, the parties to the conflict in Taiz have been using light, medium, and heavy weaponry, like Kalashnikovs, Heckler & Koch G3s, 14.5 mm weapons, 12.7 mm machine guns (DShK), 23 mm anti-aircraft weapons, 12.7 mm and 14.5 mm snipers, 40, 60, 82, and 120 mm mortar shells, defensive and offensive bombs, tanks, and RPGs. Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the forces loyal to the former President Saleh exclusively own and use 37 mm anti-aircraft guns, self-propelled and self-guided missiles, 57 mm cannons, B10 cannons, and BM-21 Grad rockets.

The fights usually took place in the middle of residential neighborhoods dense with civilians. Both conflicted parties use strategies of spreading and stationing throughout residential neighborhoods carrying out attacks on the neighborhoods that are under the control of the opponent side. The projectiles that are used in the attacks that target civilians are usually unguided, which makes it impossible for them to be precise and strike specific targets. They are indiscriminate by design. International humanitarian law bans the use of these types of weapons. Usage of such types is classified as a war crime and this also applies to the use of mortar shells, which are non-precision shells, and should never be used in attacks on military targets that are inside civilian areas, or military targets that are near civilian areas.⁽¹²⁾

(11) Blind Strikes, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights <http://www.mwatana.org/en/132016446> (visited 15 October 2016).

(12) Palestinian Armed Groups Killed Civilians On Both Sides In Attacks Amounting To War Crimes In Gaza Conflict, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/03/palestinian-armed-groups-killed-civilians-on-both-sides-in-attacks-amounting-to-war-crimes-during-2014-gaza-conflict/> (visited on 15 October 2016).

Report Methodology



Mwatana Organization for Human Rights issued this report, Chapters from Hell, based on field interviews that were conducted since the beginning of the armed conflict in the city of Taiz in April 2015 to October 2016. The field interviews were carried out in order to document the violations during the period from April 2015 to March 2016.

Mwatana field researchers and assistants carried out no less than 425 interviews in Arabic with victims, families of the victims, eyewitnesses, and workers in the medical and humanitarian fields. The team also collected no less than 55 field notes that documented cases of children recruitment and use in the conflict. The interviews were reviewed and verified by the researcher that prepared this report. The identities of a number of witnesses in different sections of this report were hidden to preserve their safety.

A delegation from Mwatana conducted three field visits to the city of Taiz during 2015 and 2016. The first visit was from the 25th of May to the 7th of June 2015; the second was from the 28th to the 31st of October 2015; and the third visit was from the 18th to the 20th of July 2016. The delegation of the Mwatana Organization, during these visits, observed the conditions of the civilians as well as the humanitarian condition of the city in light of the armed conflict, and they conducted a number of meetings and interviews.

This report was prepared to include the patterns of violations, with examples and incidents that exemplify and prove these patterns, which were investigated by Mwatana in Taiz during the period from April 2015 to March 2016. The Organization however continued to document the different violations that occurred after March 2016.

The report is made up of the following chapters:

Chapter One: Indiscriminate Attacks and Firing Live Rounds and Anti-Aircraft Shells:

This chapter is divided into two sections:

First: Indiscriminate Attacks,

Second: Firing Live Rounds and Anti-Aircraft Shells

Chapter Two: Summary Executions**Chapter Three: Imposing Blockades, Looting Aid Supplies, and Attacking Relief Organizations, Hospitals, and Medical Crews:**

This chapter is divided into three sections:

First: Imposing Blockades and Denying or Restricting Entry of Aid, Food, Consumer Goods, and Medical Supplies;

Second: Attacking Relief Organizations and Looting Humanitarian Aid Warehouses; Third: Attacks on Hospitals and Centers and Crews that Provide Medical Services.

Chapter Four: Schools Targeting, Occupying and Usage for Military Purposes**Chapter Five: Recruiting and Using Children**

Each chapter documents a number of incidents concerning each type of violation that happened during the period that this report covers. These incidents are just examples, and they do not include all of the violations. The incidents in this report were organized chronologically.

Concerning the incidents of indiscriminate attacks, the remnants of the weapons that were used were found in some of the incidents, and they were documented, as were their effects. Mwatana got help from international munitions experts to analyze the type of weapons used, and the effect of the attacks in these incidents.

The Central Market at the intersection of Jamal Street and Tahrir Street is located at the center of the city of Taiz. It was chosen as the main point to be used in determining the directions and locations of conflicting parties and the attacks launched. Google Maps was also used to estimate the distances, in addition to the testimonies that were verified by Mwatana's team and the consultations with experts specialized in spaces and planning in the governorate of Taiz.

This report, Chapters from Hell, was reviewed by experts in international humanitarian law and customary humanitarian law to perform legal analysis, and then it was reviewed and edited for publication.

Executive Summary

On 21 September 2014, Ansar Allah (Houthis) seized control of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, by force. Afterwards, the Peace and National Partnership Agreement was signed between the group and the other political factions under the sponsorship of the United Nations. This was followed by tension that lasted for weeks. On 20 January 2015, Ansar Allah (Houthis) forced President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi, the Prime Minister at the time, Khaled Mahfouz Bahah, as well as members of the cabinet, under house arrest. On 21 February 2015, President Hadi fled to Aden. A month later, on 21 March 2015, Ansar Allah militants and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, Ansar Allah's ally, advanced through Taiz and all the way to Aden in the south. They also expanded their control to other Yemeni governorates and regions.

This advance was, for Ansar Allah and their ally Saleh, the start of a new level of violent conflict. After the Yemeni Air Force, which had come under the control of Ansar Allah, bombed the Presidential Palace in Aden, where President Hadi was residing, and after the President escaped to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, armed local 'resistance' groups were formed, and they were primarily made up of members of the Islah Party, Salafi groups, the Southern Movement, and Jihadi groups, in addition to government forces and other political parties loyal to President Hadi.

After President Hadi's escape to Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched, in the early morning of Thursday, March 26, 2015, a military campaign as the head of an Arab Coalition made up of nine Arab countries. This campaign was against Ansar Allah (Houthis) and their ally, Saleh, and was in response to the request that President Hadi had submitted to the Gulf Cooperative Council, in order to enable him to restore his power and reinstall his legitimacy.

In the city of Taiz, militants affiliated with Ansar Allah (Houthis), as well as individuals from the Special Security Forces (Central Security Organization), attacked two separate demonstrations that were protesting the armed presence of Ansar Allah and their ally, Saleh, on Tuesday 24 March 2015. The two attacks killed at least 8 protesters and injured around 108 others. Right after that, the armed conflict in Taiz broke out in a way that made the city of Taiz one of the areas with the most violent clashes, clashes where Ansar Allah militants and their ally Saleh's forces are fighting the Popular Resistance forces and army units loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi. The Popular Resistance forces and army units loyal to President Hadi have been backed and get air support from the Saudi-led Arab Coalition. The majority of the fighting took place in the city of

Taiz, but it has expanded recently to the areas around the city.

As the bloody conflict progresses with increasing intensity, and the areas of the violence expand, Yemen, which is the poorest among the Arab states, has witnessed extremely worsening conditions. This deterioration is accompanied by an unprecedented break down in human rights. An appalling list of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights laws by all sides of the conflict has risen in various Yemeni cities and regions.

The city of Taiz is the most prominent Yemeni city that was reached and torn apart by the violent conflict. This city and some of its rural areas present a clear manifestation of the darkest and most tragic forms of war. It also manifests the heavy toll of war's most grave violations, such as killing through various means, destruction, and blockades. These violations have affected civilians and undermined their lives during the entire period of the armed conflict the city has witnessed.

In the context of the armed ground conflict during the period between April 2015 and March 2016, which is the focus of this report, Ansar Allah (Houthis) and former president Saleh's forces are responsible for the majority of the bloody and indiscriminate attacks that resulted in killing and injuring hundreds of civilians in the city of Taiz. On the ground, both warring sides share a pattern of positioning their forces and deploying them in the middle of heavily residential sites, and launching attacks from and on residential areas. Thousands of civilians found themselves stuck between the two sides of the conflict, where they face various forms of violations. Among the most prominent violations are killing and maiming, attacking medical staff and medical facilities, targeting schools and occupying them for military purposes, and military recruitment of children, in addition to Ansar Allah's forcing a suffocating blockade from time to time on the city to block the entry of medical and humanitarian relief and aid. Similarly, the Popular Resistance assaulted relief organizations and humanitarian aid warehouses, and it carried out summary executions.

In its report , Chapters from Hell, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights documents a number of incidents where hundreds of civilians were killed and injured, in addition to the livelihood of thousands that was damaged during the armed ground conflict and the violations of international humanitarian law that were committed by the parties to the conflict between April 2015 and March 2016. Committing these violations is still ongoing after March 2016.

During the preparation of this report, Mwatana used a methodology of investigative fieldwork. Investigative visits and direct interviews with primary information sources on incidents were conducted, alongside the collection of supporting documents. Fieldwork and investigation of the data mentioned in this report took place between May 2015 and October 2016. The organization conducted at least 425 interviews in Arabic with surviving victims, relatives of victims, and eyewitnesses, as well as humanitarian and medical staff and relevant parties of interest. Mwatana also collected at least 55 field observations, which observe cases of children recruited for military purposes.

This report contains 177 incidents, investigated by Mwatana, where international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law were violated. The organization's team has also collected testimonies regarding the blockade and restrictions imposed on entry of food, commercial and medical goods, and humanitarian aid into the city.

Mwatana has also consulted with international experts to use their analysis in the area of international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law in addition to expertise in

arms in order to analyze the weapons used in attacks that are documented in this report.

The location of the Central Market (the intersection of Jamal Street with Tahrir Street) is used as the center of the city of Taiz. Based on that, the locations and areas of control of the parties of the conflict and the areas where the attacks occurred were determined by using that point to determine the locations. Google Maps was used to estimate the distances, in addition to the testimony that was verified by Mwatana's team and consultations with experts specialized in spaces and planning in the governorate of Taiz. These were all used to measure distances and determine the location of the attacks. Additionally, a number of consultants and experts were consulted.

Regarding indiscriminate attacks and incidents of firing bullets and anti-aircraft ammunition, this report "Chapters from Hell" sheds light on 32 indiscriminate attacks and 22 incidents of firing live ammunition and anti-aircraft shells. In these attacks and incidents, at least 103 civilians were killed, including 50 children and 14 women. Furthermore, 229 civilians were injured, including 98 children and 16 women, during the period between April 2015 and March 2016.

The attacks and incidents documented in this report present a sample of scores of attacks and incidents that Mwatana documented during the same period. Mwatana has documented the killing of at least 217 civilians, including 87 children and 32 women, as well as cases of 479 civilians who were injured, of whom were 189 children and 48 women.

These incidents, attacks, and violations are divided into five main chapters, and each chapter lists the incidents chronologically.

■ Chapter One

This chapter focuses on indiscriminate attacks and firing live ammunition and anti-aircraft shells. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first focuses on victims of indiscriminate attacks on residential areas carried out by the armed parties to the conflict. The second section concentrates on incidents of victims of firing live ammunition and anti-aircraft shells.

Chapter one documents 32 incidents of indiscriminate attacks that took place in the period between April 2015 and March 2016. At least 92 civilians were killed, including 46 children and 10 women and 214 civilians were injured, including 91 children and 15 women.

The attacks this report documents present a sample out of scores of indiscriminate attacks that Mwatana documented during the same period. The organization has documented cases of at least 190 killed civilians, including 80 children and 27 women, in addition to 436 injured civilians, including 173 children and 43 women as a result of these attacks.

Section two documents 22 incidents where civilians were killed and injured as a result of firing live ammunition and anti-aircraft shells between April 2015 and March 2016. In these incidents, at least 11 civilians were killed, including 4 children and 4 women, in addition to cases of 15 injured civilians, including 7 children and 1 woman.

The incidents documented in this report are considered a sample of scores of incidents that Mwatana has documented during the same period. The organization has documented the killing

of at least 27 civilians, including 7 children and 5 women and documented the cases of at least 43 injured civilians, including 16 children and 5 women.

Research done by Mwatana shows that Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Saleh are responsible for the majority of indiscriminate and bloody attacks launched on residential areas that are under the control of the fighters of the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to president Hadi.

Results of weapons analysis show that weapons used in the indiscriminate attacks documented in this report include highly explosive mortar shells, RPG-7 shells, and BM-21 GRAD 122 mm rockets.

These attacks have hit civilian targets at times when civilians were leading an ordinary life, performing daily tasks in their houses, on the streets, and in the markets. Attacks of this type have also hit groups of children playing in their neighborhoods, on rooftops of houses, on their way to bring water, or performing other daily chores.

“Ever since the Houthi/Saleh militants came to Taiz, our lives and the city’s life have turned into hell. People’s conditions have changed. Some have lost their jobs and houses. Others had to close down their shops, and some lost their cars. The city’s life has turned into hell.” This is how Abduljalil Mahyoob Al Basheeri (50 years old) described the war and how it has turned the life of civilians into hell. Abduljalil lost his son, Anas (7 years old), because of an indiscriminate shell that fell on the Al Kuwait Mosque neighborhood in Hawdh Al Ashraaf, east of the city of Taiz on Tuesday, 1 December 2015. The shell killed three children and injured at least 10 civilians, including five children who were bringing water from charity water tanks that are distributed throughout the city.

International humanitarian law prohibits the use of unguided projectiles in attacks on heavily residential areas. This is due to the possibility of inaccuracies in aiming at specific targets, and because unguided projectiles are indiscriminate by design. Such use is consequently a war crime.

When accurate weapons are used to attack a military target that is located in the middle of a densely populated area, assessments must ensure proportionality of the attack. Failure to carry out such assessments makes indiscriminate attacks a violation of international humanitarian law and, therefore, a war crime.

■ Chapter Two

In this chapter, the report observes a number of incidents of summary executions carried out by the Popular Resistance in Taiz during varying periods of time within the period the report focuses on.

Mwatana has documented a number of separate incidents where the Popular Resistance in the city carried out extrajudicial executions against opponents who are believed to sympathize, work for, or affiliated with Ansar Allah (Houthis) or forces loyal to Saleh.

Mwatana has investigated 9 separate incidents that took place during the period covered in this report. These incidents occurred when the Popular Resistance managed to seize control over

areas that were under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis). The district of Mashra'a Wa Hadnan is an example of such areas. Similarly, there were other executions of this sort that were carried out in the center of the city.

On Sunday 16 August 2015, the Popular Resistance executed Sana'a University college professor, Afeef Abdullah Al Rumaimah (45 years old), in front of his house in the district of Mashra'a Wa Hadnan at 8:30 AM, right after he was asked by the Resistance to leave the house unarmed.

Lubna Sadiq Abdullah Al Rumaimah (25 years old) witnessed the execution of Afeef Abdullah Al Rumaimah (45 years old). She says: "He was taken from the house on Sunday, the 16th of August 2015 between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning by armed men from the Popular Resistance after they took control of our village. They took him to be a part of the negotiations that the Popular Resistance had called for. Uncle Afeef went out, and he said that he would be a mediator between Al Rumaimah family and the Resistance. When he went out, members of the Resistance handcuffed him. He was telling them that there is not a single weapon in his house, and that he had never carried a weapon in his life. He told them that he was a college professor in Sana'a University, and that he wanted to reach an agreement and truce with them, but they shot and killed him."

The victim's relatives mentioned in the interviews with Mwatana that the Popular Resistance hid the body and then threw it from the top of Hayel Saeed High School, claiming that he had committed suicide. His body remained thrown out in the open air until 1:00 PM that day.

Both international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law prohibit murder, torture, and other forms of cruel inhumane treatment, as well as enforced disappearance.

■ Chapter Three

In three sections, chapter three sheds light on the blockade, robbery of aid warehouses, as well as attacks on humanitarian aid organizations and medical staff. This includes restrictions imposed on the entry of humanitarian aid, food supplies, consumer goods and medical supplies to the city.

Based on the research done by Mwatana, Ansar Allah (Houthis), alongside forces loyal to Saleh, imposed a blockade on the city of Taiz. They banned entry of aid, food, and consumer goods, as well as medicine and medical supplies to the city. This blockade began in late July and early August 2015, and it was broken in March 2016 when the Popular Resistance seized control over the western entrance of the city. During that period and later on, the intensity of the blockade and restrictions have taken various extents from time to time.

Medical services in the city have been affected by this blockade, which led to significant deterioration in services. Hospitals have lost the ability to get access to medical supplies, medicine, fuel, and oxygen supplies, which are all vital for providing medical services.

International humanitarian law requires the sides of the conflict to allow and facilitate passing and delivery of humanitarian supplies to civilians. It also states that once the blockade becomes a collective punishment and starves civilians, then such a blockade should be banned and it may amount to a war crime.

In this report, Mwatana also sheds light on 4 incidents of assaults on relief organizations as well as robberies of humanitarian aid warehouses. During the armed conflict that has been taking place in Taiz, Mwatana verified assaults carried out by the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President Hadi on relief organizations, as well as robbery of humanitarian aid warehouses, during certain periods in the 2015 and 2016.

The report also includes 31 incidents of assaults and shelling on hospitals and medical facilities, as well as robbery of hospital possessions and one incident of kidnapping medical workers since April 2015 to March 2016 by the two conflicted armed parties. These incidents resulted in the death of 2 and the injury of 7 medical staff and patients and their companions.

The results show that the number of hospitals and public or private clinics that are still operating in the city of Taiz and neighborhoods near the city is at least 11, out of the 26 public and private hospitals that used to operate during ordinary circumstances.

International humanitarian law requires the parties to the conflict to ensure that humanitarian aid workers (individuals and agencies) are protected from assaults, harassment, terrorizing, and arbitrary arrests. The parties to the conflict must also ensure that civilian humanitarian aid workers are granted freedom of movement according to their duties.

Additionally, international humanitarian law prohibits targeting civilian sites and civilians. In this regard, hospitals and health facilities enjoy special protection due to the nature of their function.

■ Chapter Four

This chapter deals with targeting and occupying schools for military purposes by the parties to the conflict in Taiz since the beginning of the armed conflict in April 2015.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Popular Resistance have equally occupied the majority of public and private schools for their close proximity to the armed clashes locations and frontlines in and around the city of Taiz. They were used as headquarters, barracks, kitchens and food supplies stores.

During the period between July 2015 and March 2016, Mwatana documented the damage in at least 24 schools, and this damage was caused by shelling, occupation, or military use during the period of the conflict in the city of Taiz. The organization documented Ansar Allah's (Houthis) occupation of at least 7 schools, and the Popular Resistance's occupation of at least 7 other schools.

Mwatana has also documented the parties to the conflict alternating the occupation of at least 7 schools (currently occupied by the Popular Resistance). This makes a total of 14 schools that are currently occupied by the Popular Resistance. The occupation is based on the military progress that is achieved during varying periods of time. Also, at least 3 schools were damaged by attacks launched during the war.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2225/2015 on children and armed conflicts calls on all parties to the conflict to respect the civilian character of schools. The Resolution calls on the parties to not only stop targeting of schools, it also calls for putting an end to using schools

for military purposes. The resolution expresses deep concern that the military use of schools may render schools legitimate targets of attack.

■ Chapter Five

This chapter deals with the phenomenon of recruiting children for military purposes by the parties to the armed conflict in Yemen. The frequency of this phenomenon has increased as the war broke out in March 2015.

In Taiz, Ansar Allah (Houthis), and the Popular Resistance have recruited children for military purposes, including guard duties, manning security checkpoints, and direct combat operations inside the city of Taiz as well as in other frontlines in the governorate.

During the period between April 2015 and March 2016, Mwatana documented at least 27 cases of children recruitment for military purposes by Ansar Allah (Houthis). Similarly, the organization documented at least 28 cases of children recruitment for military purposes by the Popular Resistance.

Customary humanitarian law, the Geneva Protocols, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibit the recruitment of children for military purposes, and so do the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

According to the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, those under 18 must not be recruited in armed groups or forces.

Recommendations



■ The United Nations to:

- Push for the establishment of an international independent mechanism to investigate allegations of violations committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen.
- Urge parties to the conflict to comply with the legal requirements concerning their actions.
- Increase efforts to meet the needs of internally displaced persons and those affected by war, and push for medical needs provision that suits the scale of the tragedy.
- Formulate a comprehensive humanitarian aid plan in cooperation with the concerned United Nations bodies to ensure addressing the humanitarian situation in Taiz.

■ The United Nations Human Rights Council to:

- Establish an international independent investigative mechanism capable of looking into alleged violations by all parties to the conflict in Yemen,

■ The Arab Group at the United Nations Human Rights Council to:

- Stop hindering the establishment of an international independent mechanism to investigate alleged violations committed by all the parties to the conflict in Yemen and show support to the establishment of an international independent investigation mechanism.

■ **The European Union, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia to:**

- Support the establishment of an international independent mechanism to investigate allegations of violations committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen.
- Call on all parties to the conflict to comply with their commitments according to international humanitarian law.
- Urge all sides to allow for humanitarian organizations accessibility to the city of Taiz as well as its affected rural areas.

■ **Ansar Allah Armed Group (Houthis) and Forces Loyal to Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh to:**

- Stop launching indiscriminate attacks on areas populated by civilians.
- Maintain far enough distance and refrain from stationing near residential areas; places where civilians are present; or where there are civilian targets, and refrain from launching attacks from such locations, either.
- Stop targeting hospitals and medical centers and crews, and neutralize them; and refrain from positioning fighters at or near hospitals and medical centers, or using them for military purposes, such as arms storage.
- Immediately evacuate occupied schools and make sure to neutralize schools during armed conflicts with the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President Hadi.
- Commit to international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law, and distinguish between military and civilian targets.
- Stop shelling any civilian residential area indiscriminately or in any way that fails to distinguish between civilian objects from military objectives, or does not comply with the principle of proportionality, under the justification that Popular Resistance militants or forces loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi are located in such areas.
- Reveal followed measures taken before, during, and after attacks, and whether any changes have been made, in order to guarantee the protection of civilians after the incidents that resulted in killing and injuring civilians.
- Stop firing live ammunition in areas that are populated with civilians, and stop using anti-aircraft shells, which result in civilians being killed or injured in residential areas.

- End the imposed blockade on the city of Taiz and stop confiscating and restricting the entry of humanitarian aid, food, consumer goods, and medical supplies; and stop policies of collective punishment that are imposed on entire residential areas under the justification that all residents are militants just because they are under the Popular Resistance's control.
- Facilitate and ensure safe evacuations for the ill, the elderly, children and their relatives, in addition to civilians who want to leave, and pledge not to obstruct the process of evacuation.
- Stop assaults on medical staff in hospitals and health facilities or field teams in order to guarantee that they are able to operate and do their work.
- Make sure that militants from Ansar Allah (Houthis), as well as forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, commit to international humanitarian law.
- Immediately stop the recruitment of children and release all children under 18 years old fighting with the group.
- Conduct transparent investigations regarding attacks that killed and injured civilians; attacks on hospitals and medical staff and workers; and the suffering faced by civilians in Taiz because of the blockade. Those responsible should be held accountable for these violations.
- Officially announce support for the establishment of an international independent mechanism to investigate claims of violations committed by all the parties to the conflict in Yemen, and comply with this mechanism's authority.

■ **The Popular Resistance and Forces Loyal to President Hadi and the Internationally Acknowledged Government to:**

- Stop launching attacks on areas populated by civilians.
- Maintain far enough distance and refrain from stationing near residential areas; places where civilians are present; or where there are civilian targets, and refrain from launching attacks from such locations, either.
- Stop targeting hospitals and medical centers and crews, and neutralize them; and refrain from positioning fighters at or near hospitals and medical centers, or using them for military purposes, such as arms storage.
- Immediately evacuate occupied schools and make sure schools remain neutralized during armed conflicts with Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

- Commit to international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law, and distinguish between military and civilian targets.
- Stop shelling any civilian residential area indiscriminately or in a manner that fails to distinguish civilian objects from military objectives or disproportionate, under the justification that Ansar Allah (Houthis) or forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh are located in such areas.
- Reveal followed measures taken before, during, and after attacks, and whether any changes have been made, in order to guarantee the protection of civilians after the incidents that resulted in killing and injuring civilians.
- Stop firing live ammunition in areas that are populated with civilians, and stop using anti-aircraft shells, which result in civilians being killed or injured in residential areas.
- Stop assaults on and robbery of relief organizations and humanitarian aid.
- Immediately stop extrajudicial executions of prisoners of war or civilians under the justification that they either assist or affiliated with Ansar Allah (Houthis).
- Ensure that militants from the Popular Resistance, as well as forces loyal to President Hadi, commit to international humanitarian law.
- Immediately stop the recruitment of children and release all children under 18 fighting with the group.
- Conduct transparent investigations regarding attacks they launched that resulted in killing and injuring civilians, as well as assaults on relief organizations and robbery of aid warehouses, in addition to incidents of extrajudicial executions of prisoners of war and civilians, and mutilation of bodies, and to hold those responsible for these violations accountable.
- Officially announce support for the establishment of an international independent mechanism to investigate claims of violations committed by all the parties to the conflict in Yemen and to comply with this mechanism's authority.

The War in Yemen and International Humanitarian Law



■ How does international law categorize the armed conflict in Yemen?

International humanitarian law, or the laws of war, distinguishes between “international” and “non-international” armed conflicts. Under the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the laws concerning international armed conflicts apply to all cases of armed conflict between two or more states. While international humanitarian law provides no guidance on whether an entity such as the Houthis represents the Yemeni state, as a matter of general international law, the Houthi authority does not appear to meet the requirements of statehood.

For a non-international armed conflict, the parties to the conflict can be between government forces and one or more non-state armed groups, or between two or more non-state armed groups. For the purposes of international law, the armed groups must exhibit sufficient organization and control to be capable of sustaining military operations and adhering to international humanitarian law, so they can be considered “parties” to the conflict. To constitute an armed conflict, there also needs to be a sufficient degree of intensity in hostilities between the parties, measured by the weapons employed, duration and other factors.

Even though many countries are involved in the conflict in Yemen, the fighting does not involve one state engaged in armed conflict with another state, so it is not an international armed conflict. Instead the legal regime for a non-international armed conflict applies.

As a practical matter, international humanitarian law on the means and methods of warfare is largely the same whether an international or non-international armed conflict. A key difference is that during an international armed conflict, captured soldiers from national armed forces and associated militias must be given the full protections afforded prisoners-of-war.

■ 2. What law is applicable to the fighting in Yemen and who is bound by it?

The non-international armed conflict between coalition forces with its Yemeni allies and the Houthi forces and their Yemeni allies is governed by international humanitarian law set out in treaties and in the rules of customary international law. The most important treaty law is Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which all members of the coalition are party. Common Article 3, as discussed below, sets forth minimum standards for all parties to a non-international armed conflict. Yemen and some states participating in the armed conflict are also party to Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, which provides further protections for combatants and civilians during non-international armed conflicts.

All parties to Yemen's armed conflict—including non-state armed groups—are responsible for complying with the requirements of international humanitarian law. That is, each party must respect and ensure respect for the laws of war. This obligation does not depend on reciprocity. Parties to a conflict must respect the requirements whether or not the opposing side abides by them. It also does not depend on the reason underlying the conflict or why any party has resorted to using force, whether government forces or non-state armed groups. And all parties to an armed conflict are held to the same standards, regardless of any disparity in the harm caused by alleged violations.⁽¹³⁾

(13) Questions and Answers: The Conflict in Yemen and International Law, Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/06/q-conflict-yemen-and-international-law> (visited on 15 October 2016).

Chapter One:

Indiscriminate Attacks and Firing Live Rounds and Anti-Aircraft Projectiles

■ Legal Framework:

The International Humanitarian Law stemmed from the four Geneva Conventions which Yemen has ratified along with the customary humanitarian law oblige parties to the conflict to a set of rules that control practices in war and armed conflict.

Article 12 of Additional Protocol (II) relating to the protection of the victims of non-international armed conflicts states that the parties to the conflict must always differentiate between combatants and civilians; and that attacks must not be directed at civilians; and that only combatants can be attacked.

Under Article 13, to ensure the protection of civilians, the parties to the conflict must take all possible precautions and steps to spare the lives of civilians and civilian objects, to ensure that the civilian populations are not attacked, and to limit fighting that results in the killing and injuring of civilians or damaging of civilian objects. Under international humanitarian law, the parties to the conflict must differentiate between civilian and military targets during the course of hostilities.

It should be noted that even attacks that are carried out against combatants and military targets are subject to criteria that aims to ensure the protection of civilians during the course of hostilities. For example, the parties to the conflict must assess the type and nature of weapons used, their expected effect, their range, and if there are any other tactics that could better protect civilians and facilities. They must also assess sites if they are military targets and/or combatant(s). In areas with a high population density that have a military target in the middle of a civilian area, the parties to the conflict must use precision weapons in a manner that limits the danger and number of civilian deaths and injuries.

International humanitarian law prohibits the use of unguided projectiles in areas with a high civilian population because they cannot be aimed at a specific target and are indiscriminate by design. Their use is considered a war crime. Mortar shells, which are non-precision projectiles,

must never be used in attacks on military targets that are in or near civilian areas.⁽¹⁴⁾

When using precision weapons to attack military targets that are located in areas with a high civilian population, the assessment should ensure that the attack proportionate. Failure to do so renders the attacks a violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime.

Mwatana through its field research in Taiz, carried out an assessment that concluded that the parties to the conflict have violated international humanitarian law, and that they might have committed war crimes using a number of precision and non-precision weapons, which have led to the death and injury of hundreds of civilians and damage to hundreds of civilian objects, including schools, hospitals, and houses.

In cases where precise weapons were used to target what seem to be military targets in residential areas, areas with high civilian populations, or close to them, Mwatana Organization documented numerous incidents where the parties to the conflict seemingly did not apply or adhere to the protections and guarantees mentioned above. For example, the possibility that the weapons are used indiscriminately without concern for the residential population or weapons remnants that could cause the death and injury to a number of civilians while they are going through their daily lives.

In a large number of cases that were researched by Mwatana, it was difficult for its field team to identify the military targets or their location, if any. The team could not determine the source of the attack, or if civilians were caught in crossfire during the clashes. However, the continual nature of the attacks led to the killing and injuring of hundreds of civilians.

Mwatana's field research reached the conclusion that many of the attacks in Taiz were indiscriminate and caused the death and injury of hundreds of civilians in areas full of civilians, and areas that did not have clear military targets according to Mwatana's investigation. Taking into account the large number of these repeated incidents during the year that this report covers, the parties to the conflict have deliberately continued carrying out these attacks, even though they knew the risk of deaths and injuries among civilians.

There was no indication in the incidents that were investigated by Mwatana that civilians had received a warning or been informed of any precautions that could better protect them.

Mwatana was unable to obtain information from the parties to the conflict about the precautions or rules of engagement that were used to protect civilians. Despite this, the organization has collected enough evidence to make it believe that the parties to the conflict have violated international humanitarian law and committed what amount to war crimes.

(14) Palestinian armed groups killed civilians on both sides in attacks amounting to war crimes, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/03/palestinian-armed-groups-killed-civilians-on-both-sides-in-2014-gaza-conflict/> (visited on 15 October 2016)

■ ■ Section One: Indiscriminate Attacks

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in the city of Taiz in April 2015 between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Saleh on the one side and the Popular Resistance forces and forces loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi on the other side, civilians in the city of Taiz have been harmed by indiscriminate attacks that are carried out on residential neighborhoods in the city. In many cases, fighters from both sides of the conflict have been positioned in the middle of residential neighborhoods and near civilian sites, like schools and hospitals.

Some of the incidents that were documented by Mwatana took place during the clashes between the two sides in areas or neighborhoods inside or around the city of Taiz that are densely populated. The majority of the documented attacks took place in streets, neighborhoods, and markets distant from the locations of the clashes and frontlines of the fighting. Collectively, these attacks led to the killing and injury of hundreds of civilians, and, in some cases, it was difficult to find the remnants of the projectiles used so that Mwatana can investigate their type and possible launching source.

The districts of Al Mudhaffar and Al Qahirah constituting the center of the city of Taiz, are heavily affected by these attacks. Other attacks took place in the districts of Salh, Altaa'iziyah, Mashra'a Wa Hadnan, Sabir Al Mawadim, Al Wazi'iyah, Hayfan, Al Misrakh, Jabal Habashy, As Silw, Ash Shamayatayn, and Al Mukha. These districts make up most of the rural areas of the governorate of Taiz, and the fighting moved to the rural areas after months of being limited to the city of Taiz. The pace of the attacks intensified in August 2015, after the Popular Resistance took control of the middle of the city, and the areas of control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) were pushed back to the neighborhoods and areas surrounding the city of Taiz.

Through the interviews that were conducted when investigating these incidents, Mwatana learned that the civilian victims were killed in their homes, while they were out in the streets and markets getting necessities. Mwatana documented attacks that caused civilian casualties, including children, while they were filling their water containers from the water tanks distributed throughout the city. These water tanks were provided by local initiatives and charity and relief organizations to help provide some of the important needs that had gotten harder to secure during the blockade.

Furthermore, Mwatana documented some attacks where a barrage of shells was fired simultaneously at different neighborhoods in the same districts. In some of the attacks, the time period between one shell and the next was minutes, or even seconds.

Analysis of attacks where Mwatana was able to find and examine the remnants of the weapons used and the effect they caused to determine the type, range, and other characteristics with the help of international munitions experts, showed that the weapons used included: highly explosive mortar shells, RPG-7 rockets, highly explosive tank shells, cannon shells, 122 mm M-21 shells that are fired from BM-21 Grad launchers, and highly explosive 115 mm tank shells.

Mwatana documented the killing of no less than 190 civilians, including 80 children and 27 women, and the injuring of no less than 436 civilians, including 173 children and 43 women, from April 2015 to March 2016, by indiscriminate attacks that were carried out against residential

neighborhoods in Taiz.

The research carried out by Mwatana concluded that Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal former President Saleh were responsible for the majority of the bloody attacks that killed and injured hundreds of civilians. These indiscriminate attacks were launched against residential neighborhoods that at the time were under the control of fighters from the Popular Resistance. The research also concluded that both sides to the conflict positioned and spread their forces in the middle of neighborhoods condensed with civilian and launched their attacks from these neighborhoods.

This section of the report will discuss 32 attacks that killed no less than 92 civilians, including 46 children and 10 women and injured no less than 214 civilians, including 91 children and 15 women.

■ The Incidents:

Al Kawthar Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 27 April 2015:

On Monday, the 27th of April 2015, shells that fell in the Al Kawthar neighborhood in Al Qahirah district, around 1.3 kilometers to the northeast of the center of the city, killed one woman and one man. The victims were Bahiyah Mujahid Al Maqtari (75 years old) and Mu'een Mukhtar Abdulmalik Al Maqtari (20 years old). Six civilians were also injured, among them two children: Riyadh Saeed Muhammad Al Shabhah (35 years old), Muhammad Ahmad Abdullah Al Hitari (34 years old), Bassim Abdulmalik Shamsan (40 years old), Abdelfattah Abdullah Al Hitari (26 years old), Abdulrahman Bassim Abdulmalik Shamsan (16 years old), and Tamam Ahmad Abdullah Al Maqtari (15 years old). The neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Ali Muhammad Rawih (45 years old), Bahiyah's neighbor, says: "Bahiyah was going out to her sheep in her backyard as she used to, and I was at the time in my house. I heard a very loud explosion at around 7:45 AM, so I went out of my house and saw smoke coming out of an area near Bahiyah's backyard. I found her on the ground, injured by some shrapnel, and bleeding profusely. Her home was also damaged by some of the shrapnel from the shell."⁽¹⁵⁾

Rawih also said that the area had not been the site of any fighting, and that there were no armed men in the neighborhood. It is believed that the source of the shells was the Post and Communication Building, which is around 600 to 700 meters to the south of the area where the shell fell. This building was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).⁽¹⁶⁾

Al Shabhah, who was in the area of the incident and was injured along with five others, says: "I was with a number of friends and some young men near the home of Mu'een Al Maqtari, and it was around 7:45 in the morning. We heard the sound of an explosion in the home of Bahiyah

(15) Interview by Mwatana with Ali Muhammad Rawih, 12 July 2015.

(16) See previous footnote.

Al Maqtari. A few minutes after the first shell fell, another shell fell near the home of Mu'een Al Maqtari. We were sitting on the other side of the house, and we went to the area to see if anyone had been injured or killed by the shell. While we were going there, we were surprised when a third shell fell near the house, and we were very close to where it fell. Shrapnel flew everywhere and I was injured, along with the people that were with me, and we fell. People gathered around us to take us to the hospital, and they were very tense because they were afraid that another shell would hit. Mu'een died on the scene.”⁽¹⁷⁾

Al Osaifirah Neighborhood, At Ta'iziyah District, 3 May 2015:

On Sunday, the 4th of May 2015, at around 11:00 AM, four shells fell in the area of Al Maftash on Al Osaifirah Street, around 2.5 kilometers to the north of the center of the city.

The neighborhood includes a residential neighborhood for Al Muhamasheen (marginalized people). Both parties to the conflict split control of the neighborhood, the Popular Resistance controls the southern part of the neighborhood, while Ansar Allah (Houthis) controls the rest of the areas in the neighborhood.

A shell fell on the home of Ali Al Karkoos, while three other shells fell near that residential area. Nazeedah Tawfeeq Ahmad Qayed Farea (7 years old), who was inside the home, died, after she sustained injuries all over her body from the shrapnel. She was taken to Al Rawdhah Hospital for treatment, but she died.⁽¹⁸⁾

Al Salkhanah Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 30 May 2015

On Saturday, the 30th of May 2015, at around 3:00 AM, falling shells in Al-Salkhanah neighborhood in Al-Qahirah district, 1 kilometer to the north of the center of the city, killed Ahmad Othman Saif Hasan (25 years old) and injured Saffiyah Khalid Saeed (55 years old) and Sami Ahmad Khalid Saeed (24 years old). The neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Sadiq Ahmad Othman Saif Hassan (37 years old) was in the home next to his apartment when the shell fell on it. Sadiq says, remembering what happened on that day: “I heard the explosion of seven shells in the neighborhood and I was worried and afraid. When I went home, I found that the wall of the balcony had fallen onto the street, and, when I went up to the apartment, I found that it had been destroyed. I found the bottom half of my brother Fahd’s body, while the top half of his body had been shredded. I found my brother-in-law, Sami, covered in blood, and he and my mother (Saffiyah) were taken to the Yemen International Hospital. My mother broke one of her legs and her right hand, and Sami’s whole body was covered in shrapnel.”⁽¹⁹⁾

(17) Interview by Mwatana with Riyadh Saeed Muhammad Al Shabhah, 8 July 2015.

(18) Interview by Mwatana with a witness, Akram Al Shar’abi, 11 July 2015.

(19) Interview by Mwatana with Sadiq Ahmad Othman Saif Hasan, 27 June 2015.

Al Rawdhah Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 6 July 2015:

On Monday, the 6th of July 2015, which was during Ramadan, between 5:00 and 6:00 PM, shells that fell on Al Rawdhah Street, in the Al Qahirah district, around 3 kilometers in the northeast of the center of the city, led to the death of at least 3 civilians, among them a child. They were Hamood Hatem (45 years old), Muhammad Hamood Hatem (12 years old), and Abdulwahab Abdullah Ahmad (30 years old). The neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Abdulrahman Muhammad, one of Hamood's neighbors, says: "I was sitting in front of my house with some other guys, a little bit before sunset and the time to break our fast, when we heard a shell exploding near us. We could not see anything because of the dust. After that, the guys that were with me and I ran to the area that the shell struck, and I saw three people that had been injured on the ground, next to the door. They were bleeding profusely, and their bodies were drowning in their blood. Muhammad's mother was yelling for us to take them to the hospital. I helped the guys take the three people that were injured to the Al Rawdhah Hospital. Muhammad's mother almost went crazy seeing them bleeding on the ground like that. It was a very emotional scene."⁽²⁰⁾

Al Thawrah School Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 22 July 2015:

On Wednesday, the 22nd of July 2015, at around 12:30 AM, a shell that fell on a home on Al Khayateen Street in the Al Thawrah School Neighborhood in the Al Qahirah district, around 600 meters to the south of the center of the city, led to six civilians being injured, including four children. The area was under the control of the Popular Resistance after it had seen clashes between the two parties to the conflict.

Before the shell fell, there were clashes between the Popular Resistance, which was centered in Al Hurriyah Square, and Ansar Allah (Houthis), who were centered in Cairo Castle. The source of the shells that were being fired at the time was Cairo Castle.⁽²¹⁾

The distance between the two parties to conflict, in Al Hurriyah Square and Cairo Castle, was around 2 kilometers, while the distance between Al Hurriyah Square and the location that the shell fell in is around 1.16 kilometers. As for the distance between Cairo Castle and the location where the shell hit, it is around 800 meters.

The mother of Kareem Muhammad Rizq (16 years old) and Ibrahim Muhammad Rizq (10 years old), who were injured during the incident, says: "The boys were on the roof of the house, and, at around 12:30 AM, there was an explosion that shook the house to the point that dust fell on my head and my daughter from the ceiling of the room that we were in. I heard my boys screaming and crying, and we rushed to the roof. I saw my children bleeding, and the neighbors came out of their homes to rush my children to the Al Rawdhah Hospital. The shell fell on a house that was 1 meter from ours, and the shrapnel hit the boys. I was crying, and my daughters and

(20) Interview by Mwatana with Abdulrahman Muhammad, 29 June 2015.

(21) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 22 August 2015.

I were scared to death. We could not sleep out of fear that another shell would fall on us. How would you feel when you are safe and asleep, and you wake up to the sound of an explosion and blood all over your body?!”⁽²²⁾

Hawdh Al Ashraaf, Salh District, 9 August 2015:

On Sunday, the 9th of August 2015, at 5:30 PM, a shell that fell on the Al Sameel Market neighborhood in the area of Hawdh Al Ashraaf in the Salh district, around 1.6 kilometers to the east of the center of the city, led to the injury of 16 civilians, including 12 children and 1 woman.

The site of the incident was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis), and there was a gathering of armed men from the group. There was also a tank that was in the residential neighborhood, and it was around 120 meters from where the shell struck.

After analyzing the remnants of the weapons used, it became clear that this was a highly-explosive 120 mm mortar shell, and the location of the Popular Resistance forces was only dozens of meters away. They were located in the Al Ashbat neighborhood near the Al Noor Masjid, which was 250 meters from the location of the attack. The shell was launched from a location that was under the control of the Popular Resistance.⁽²³⁾

Some of the people that were injured in the incident said that they fell to the ground as soon as the shell hit: “We were crying and screaming. Some of the people from the neighborhood, and some Houthi armed men took us on military vehicles to the military hospital. Before the incident, we heard nonstop clashes, like every day. When we hear shelling, we hear it from the tank that was near here...the tank belongs to the Houthis and their allied forces. We feel afraid now, and we cannot go out into the street.”⁽²⁴⁾

Al Dharbah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 11 August 2015:

On Tuesday, the 11th of August 2015, a shell that fell on a home in the area of Al Dharbah in the district of Al Mudhaffar, around 900 meters to the west of the center of the city, led to the injury of four civilians, including a woman. The neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Muhammad Abdoh Qayed says: “At around 11:00 AM, I was in my house, and I heard the sound of a shell exploding in the home of our neighbor, Khaled Murshid Ahmad (50 years old). I went out in a hurry to his home to take the injured to the hospital. The house was on fire because the shell had gone through the wall and exploded in the kitchen. The shrapnel from the explosion hit one of the cooking gas cylinders, and it exploded. We moved the remaining cylinders out and put out the fire, and this took around half an hour. After that, we were able to transport the people that were injured to the hospital, including Khalid, his brother, Murshid Abdullah (45 years old),

(22) Interview by Mwatana with the mother of Kareem and Ibrahim, 22 August 2015.

(23) Mwatana has pictures of the remnants of the shell that was used.

(24) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 22 August 2015.

Ammar Khalid Murshid (20 years old), and Omar Khalid Murshid (25 years old). We took them to the Al Rawdhah Hospital.”⁽²⁵⁾

The Wadi Al Madam Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 13 August 2015:

On Thursday, the 13th of August, 2015, at around 7:45 AM, a shell that fell on the intersection in the Wadi Al Madam neighborhood in Al Qahirah district, around 500 meters to the south of the center of the city, led to the death of no less than 3 civilians, including a child, and the injury of no less than 16 others, including 4 children. The victims were killed and injured while they were gathered around a water truck, and the neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance. When Mwatana visited the location of the incident, there was a Popular Resistance security checkpoint that was around 35 meters away from where the shell struck.

An eyewitness that was in that area said that, at the time, they were busy getting water, and, suddenly, two shells fell on where they were gathered. Some of the people that were there took the people were struck by shrapnel from the two shells. After around 3 minutes, two other shells fell on the casualties and the people trying to help them. The victims were taken to the Al Rawdhah Hospital, Al Safwah Hospital, and the Yemen International Hospital.⁽²⁶⁾

Minutes after this incident, at around 8:00 AM, a shell fell on a home in the same area causing the death of a woman named Mona Hameed Saeed, and the injury of four civilians, including three children: Jahar Haidar Sa’d (16 years old), Muheeb Haidar Sa’d (18 years old), Musa Haidar Sa’d (14 years old), and Omar Mukhtar Haidar Sa’d (2 years old). The shell struck the fourth story of a five-story building, and it struck the eastern side of the building.

One of the relatives of the victims who was there at the time of the incident, says: “I woke up to the sound of an explosion in Wadi Al Madan. After around 10 minutes, there was a large explosion in the house, and I was thrown up into the air. I cannot determine the source of the shell. I went to the room that Mona was in, and I found her on the ground, bleeding profusely. Blood had covered her whole body, and the children were crying. I was shocked and felt very numb, and I did not understand what had happened. I did not know what to do. Ten minutes later, I transported her and the children to the Al Rawdhah Hospital, but, she died before we arrived at the hospital. I still hear the sound of the explosion, and I still see the huge amount of blood and terror. I hope that these conditions end quickly. There is blood and pain in every house now.”⁽²⁷⁾

Al Mughtaribeen Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 14 August 2015:

On Friday, the 14th of August 2015, at around 11:40 AM, a shell fell on a house that was in Al Mughtaribeen neighborhood in Al Qahirah district, around 700 meters to the north of the center of the city. The Popular Resistance controls that area.

(25) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Abdoh Qayed, 7 September 2015.

(26) Interview by Mwatana with Wajdi Abdoh Muhammad Al Sahir and Abdullah Ali Al Barq, 15 August 2015.

(27) Interview by Mwatana with Abdoh Omar Hasan, 15 August 2015.

The attack led to the killing of two children: Elham Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Samawi (6 years old) and Marina Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Samawi (14 months old). The attack also injured three civilians, including a child and a woman: Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Samawi (40 years old), Amal Sadiq Muhammad Al Marwa'i (37 years old), and Muneer Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Samawi (7 years old).

Sameer Ahmad Al Samawi (19 years old), one of the survivors, says: "After we finished having breakfast, I was with Ameer in a room next to the room where the rest of the family was. Suddenly, I heard a shell exploding, and I thought, at first, that it had struck the hotel that was next to our house. As soon as I went to the next room, I could not see my family because of all of the dust and smoke. There was a hole in the ceiling of the room, caused by the shell, and my father got up and walked a little until he got to the door, then he fell. As for my sisters, they had died instantly. Some guys from the neighborhood took my father and my brother, Muneer, to the Al Safwah Hospital, and my brother Ameer, along with a group of guys, took my mother to the Al Rawdhah Hospital. They later transferred her to the Yemen International Hospital. My mother and father are still in the intensive care units (when the interview was conducted), and I am still in shock, and I cannot believe what I saw, especially when I saw my sisters."⁽²⁸⁾

At the same time (at around 11:40 AM), two shells fell. The first fell on the home of Abdullah Abdulwahab Qayed Al Haddad (64 years old), which is near Al-Samawi house, and this shell killed his two granddaughters; Ayah Abdulkareem Abdullah Al Haddad (12 years old) and Raghad Abdulkareem Abdullah Al Haddad (10 years old). As for the other shell, it fell on Al-Saeed Masjid in Al Osaifrah neighborhood.

Al Haddad, who was at the scene at the time of the incident, says: "It was a calm morning, and Ayah and Raghad were on the roof of the house, which was exposed to the direction of Cairo Castle. They were bringing water from the water tank. When the time for Friday prayer came, three shells fell on this area. The first fell on Al-Samawi house, the second on my house, and the third hit Al-Saeed Masjid. The time between one shell and the next was just a few minutes. The mother went straight to the roof of the house after hearing the explosion, and I heard her yelling: 'Ayah died! Raghad died!' I went to the roof and saw a scene that shook me to my core. They were completely covered in blood, and their mother was in a very deplorable condition. That night, the mother made dinner, and she called her daughters to come eat. She could not process what had happened to her daughters, and I cannot describe the pain that I feel."⁽²⁹⁾

It is believed that the source of the shells is Cairo Castle, which was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) at the time. The distance between Cairo Castle and the location of the incident is estimated to be around 2 kilometers.

The Osaifrah Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 20 August 2015:

On Thursday, the 20th of August 2015, at 5:00 PM, a BM-21 Grad rocket hit Osaifrah Neighborhood (the Osaifrah village) in Al-Qahirah district, around 2 kilometers to the north of

(28) Interview by Mwatana with Sameer Al Samawi, 18 August 2015.

(29) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Abdulwahab Al Haddad, 19 August 2015.

the center of the city. This rocket killed no less than 10 civilians, including 9 children, and injured 13 civilians, including 5 children.

When Mwatana visited that area, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance, the people of the neighborhood were still cleaning up the area where the projectile landed on a road paved with stones. They were cleaning the area with water to remove the blood and remnants of the victims.

After analyzing the remnants of the rocket used in the attack, it became clear that it was a 122 mm M-21 rocket launched from a BM-21 Grad rocket launcher. This is a weapon that only Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh's forces obtained.⁽³⁰⁾

Muhammad Sultan Al Dumaini (48 years old), whose son, Raidan Muhammad Al Dumaini (14 years old) was killed in the attack, says: "A number of people from the neighborhood were hanging out and chewing Qat at the end of the street, and, near them, children were playing. At 5:00 in the afternoon, there was a violent explosion. At the time, I was at the end of the street on my water truck. When I heard the explosion, and saw the smoke, I thought that a shell had hit my home or Al-Khodhmi grocery store, which is on the same street. I reached the place where the rocket had struck, and I was stupefied by the horror of the scene. I felt like I was in Gaza or in Syria. Children were strewn about on the ground, and blood was everywhere. Sounds of screaming and crying filled the scene. I cannot describe the scene because I will not be able to fully explain how bad and how ugly it was. My biggest shock was when I found my son, Raidan, among the dead. There was a large open wound on his back, and his intestines were on the ground. There were other injuries on his neck and head, as well as the rest of his body."⁽³¹⁾

"Do not ask me about how I felt...I do not know what we had done, or what the children had done for all of this to happen. Fear took control of all of us, young and old, and, after this incident, a lot of the people in the neighborhood left." Al Dumaini added. He also said that the injured were taken to the Al Rawdhah Hospital and Al Safwah Hospital.⁽³²⁾

Saynah Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 21 August 2015:

On Friday, the 21st of August 2015, a shell that fell near Thabet Brothers Group Company in Saynah neighborhood in the Al Qahirah district, which is around 3.2 kilometers to the southwest of the center of the city, killed two children and injured seven civilians, including two children.

Basheer Hassan Abdulqadir (40 years old), the father of Amjad Basheer Hassan Abdulqadir (17 years old), who was injured in the incident, says: "Amjad and some of the children were playing near the grocery store near us, at 6:30 PM, when a shell fell on them. Two of them were killed: Khalil Mansour (16 years old) and Abdulbaqi Sultan Al Khulaidi (14 years old). Many were injured. I, along with a number of the guys from the neighborhood, took the people that were

(30) Mwatana has pictures of the remnantsof the munitions used.

(31) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Al Dumaini, 23 August 2015.

(32) See previous footnote.

injured to Al-Mudhaffar Hospital, and they were later transferred to the Al-Rawdhah Hospital.”⁽³³⁾

Abdulqadir added that the area was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) until a few days before the attack, and that, on that day, the Popular Resistance had taken control of it.⁽³⁴⁾

It is believed that the shell was launched from the direction of the Republican Palace Intersection, which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).

The Al Kawthar Neighborhood in the Al Qahirah District, 23 August 2015:

On Sunday, the 23rd of August 2015, at around 5:15 in the evening, a shell fell on Al-Kawthar neighborhood in Al-Qahirah district, around 1.3 kilometers to the northeast of the center of the city, and it killed no less than four civilians, including two children, and injured nine others, including six children.

The area was under the control of the Popular Resistance, and the nearest security checkpoint was on Al Mushki Street, according to interviews that were conducted by Mwatana. Al Mushki street is around 3 kilometers from the Al Kawthar neighborhood.

One of the relatives of Ahmad Mahfoudh Salem (17 years old), who is one of the people injured during this incident, says: “I was in my home, and, at around 5:15 in the evening, a shell exploded far away from my home, shortly after which, I heard a very loud explosion of a shell, and I thought that it had hit my house. I went out of my house to see if my brothers and my brother’s children were okay, and I saw the children that were playing soccer near the home of Muhammad Ismael, where the shell hit. The children were all on the ground, bleeding. I saw Farooq Abdulwarith Saeed (46 years old) and his son Mayar (8 years old), and their bodies had been completely destroyed. Farooq’s head had been separated from his body. After that, a number of the guys from the neighborhood took the injured to the hospital on a motorcycle and truck.”⁽³⁵⁾

Muhammad Jamal Hadi (18 years old), who was one of the people that were injured during the incident, adds: “We were playing soccer in the neighborhood when, suddenly, we heard the explosion of a shell near the Saddam Pharmacy on the main street. We stopped playing, and Hussam Hashim Mustafa (10 years old)—one of the people killed—took the ball and went home. His grandmother told him to go get his brother, Mustafa (12 years old)—one of the people injured—to come home. Hussam came and told us that the place was dangerous, and that we had to go back to our homes. We told him that we would go home if another shell hit. At the time, I was near the house door, and I fell because of the explosion. I felt as if the world had gone dark around me, and I felt like my body had been cut into two by the explosion. All of the people that I remember from the street, and the people that took us with their own cars to the Al Safwah Hospital, were people from the neighborhood. I kept hearing the sound of the exploding shell until the next day. We want to live, we want to study, and we want to play like we used to.”⁽³⁶⁾

(33) Interview by Mwatana with Basheer Abdulqadir, 30 August 2015.

(34) See previous footnote.

(35) Interview by Mwatana with one of the relatives of the victims, 24 August 2015.

(36) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Jamal Hadi, 27 August 2015.

Jamal Street, Al Mudhaffar District, 23 August 2015:

On Sunday, the 23rd of August 2015, at around 10:00 PM, a Grad rocket fell on the building of Muhammad Dirham Al-Qadasi on Jamal Street, in front of the Deluxe Hotel in Al-Qahirah district in the middle of the city. The second and third stories of the Al-Qadasi building collapsed, and six women and a child were killed. Two men, two children, and a woman were injured.

The Popular Resistance were in control of the area, and there are a number of stores on the street, which is considered the largest and most important street in the city. Before the rocket fell, there was an exchange of cannon fire in the area of Al Hawban to the east of the city, which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis). They were firing towards Cairo Castle, which the Popular Resistance had taken control of at the time.

After analyzing the remnants of the weapon used in the attack, it was found that it was a 122 mm M-21 rocket, and that it was fired from a BM-21 Grad rocket launcher. Only Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh's forces have this weapon.⁽³⁷⁾

During this incident, the following people were killed: Sameerah Muhammad Saif Al Qadasi (18 years old), Sanaa Jameel Dirham Al Qadasi (20 years old), Hayah Qassim Noman Al Qadasi (30 years old), Amirah Abdoh Dirham Al Qadasi (20 years old), Amal Abdoh Dirham Al Qadasi (16 years old), Sameerah Abdoh Dirham Al Qadasi (20 years old), and Maryam Muhammad Dirham Al Qadasi (18 years old). Abdullah Saeed Dirham Al Qadasi (9 years old), Amat Al Rahman Jameel Dirham Al Qadasi (17 years old), Ahmad Yahya Hasan (35 years old), Ibtihal Saeed Dirham Al Qadasi (41 years old), and Muhammad Dirham Al Qadasi (54 years old) were injured.

Muhammad Dirham Al Qadasi (54 years old), who was injured and is the head of the family, says: "I was working in my grocery store, which is in the same building, on the ground floor. The situation that day was not safe in most of the areas of the city, and had been unsafe since the morning. Shelling of most residential neighborhoods from Houthi positions around the city was ongoing. I heard the sound of the projectile before it fell, and there was a loud explosion that made the products fall off the shelves in the store. I was shocked and did not feel anything, and I went crazy when I saw the rubble that was my home. It took people a whole hour to pick up the rubble and take out the victims to take them to the Al Rawdhah Hospital. I did not expect any of this to happen."⁽³⁸⁾

Al Qadasi added that there were no militants from the Popular Resistance on the street when the attack was carried out.⁽³⁹⁾

(37) Mwatana has pictures of the remnants of the munitions used.

(38) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Dirham Al Qadasi, 24 August 2015.

(39) See previous footnote.

Al Rabee'i Area, At Ta'iziyah District, 24 August 2015:

On Monday, the 24th of August 2015, at around 4:30 in the evening, a shell fell on the Al Dabh village in Al-Rabee'i area in Atta'iziyah district, around 15 kilometers to the west of the center of the city. This shell killed a man and a child and injured no less than 13 civilians, including 8 children.

Abdullah Abdoh Abbas, whose brother, Muhammad Abdoh Abbas (30 years old) and children, Abdulrahman Abbas (10 years old) and Rami Abbas (13 years old) were injured in the incident, says: "They were sitting near Abdullah Abdoh Saif's grocery store after praying the afternoon prayer, when the shell fell. Shrapnel hit everyone that was there. The victims were taken to the hospital in our car because there are no ambulances. They were taken to Al-Karamah Hospital, then they were transferred to Al-Safwah Hospital."⁽⁴⁰⁾

This area is considered an area of constant clashes. According to Abbas, this was the first attack in the area that produced casualties, unlike previous attacks.

Al Qadhi Valley, Al Qahirah District, 30 August 2015:

On Sunday, the 30th of August 2015, at around 9:00 PM, a shell fell on the home of Naji Ahmad Mansour in Al-Qadhi Valley in Al-Qahirah district, around 1.5 kilometers to the west of the center of the city. This shell killed no less than 3 civilians, including a child, and injured a man and a child.

Bashar Murshid Al Tahiri (32 years old), who is a neighbor of the victims, says: "I was on the roof of my home, which is next to the home of Naji Ahmad Mansour. It was 9:00 PM, and Ahmad Naji Ahmad was next to me. We heard the sound of a loud explosion, and shrapnel flew to the roof of my house, but we were not injured. We went out quickly, and went to the house that was bombed. We found Muhannad Naji Ahmad Mansour (16 years old) injured. I, along with some people from the neighborhood, took out the bodies, and took the people that were injured to the hospital. We took them to Al-Rawdhah Hospital on a military vehicle belonging to the Popular Resistance, and a water truck. Around 20 minutes after the first shell fell, three other shells fell, but, all praise be to Allah, no one got hurt. This area was full of civilians."⁽⁴¹⁾

The neighborhood is under the control of the Popular Resistance. It is believed that the source of the shells was the area of Osaifirah and 40 Street, which were controlled by Ansar Allah (Houthis) at the time. This area is around 2.5 kilometers from the area that the shells struck.

(40) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Abdoh Abbas, 25 August 2015.

(41) Interview by Mwatana with Bashar Murshid Al Tahiri, 31 August 2015.

The Al Madam Valley Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 3 September 2015:

On Thursday, the 3rd of September 2015, at around 11:00 PM, a shell fell on the Al Madam Valley neighborhood in Al-Qahirah district, around 1 kilometer to the south of the center of the city. This shell killed a civilian and injured three others.

Abdullah Ali Yahiya Mus'id (20 years old), who was injured by shrapnel in his leg, says: "We were chewing Qat on the bench near Al-Shawafi grocery store. It was a calm day since the morning. At 11:00 PM, a shell suddenly fell in front of us. I remember that I heard a sound like thunder before, and I felt that I had been violently thrown from the place I was in. I felt, afterwards, numbness in my hand and foot, and they were bleeding. All of the people that were sitting near the grocery store were injured, including my father, Ali Yahiya Ahmad (45 years old). Some of the people from the neighborhood took us to the hospital in their own cars. My father is still in a coma, and he is in Al-Rawdhah Hospital (until the time of the interview). It is better to die than to keep living like this, living in fear and worrying all the time."⁽⁴²⁾

Al Madam Valley neighborhood is under the control of the Popular Resistance. Mus'id also said that he was unable to determine the source of the shell, and that most of the people left the neighborhood because it was constantly shelled during that period.

Al Dhahiriyah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 3 September 2015:

On Thursday, the 3rd of September 2015, at around 9:00 PM, a shell fell on the Al Dhahiriyah neighborhood in the Al Mudhaffar district, around 1.2 kilometers to the south of the center of the city. This shell killed Muneeb Jameel Muhammad Ali Ameen (15 years old), and injured Muhammad Muhammad Muhsin Muqbil (42 years old).

The shell fell near the home of Jameel Muhammad Ali Ameen, and, when Mwatana visited Al-Dhahiriyah neighborhood, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance, the family was emptying their home to leave the area. Muhammad Muqbil, who was injured by shrapnel in his stomach, lower face, and right buttocks says: "Muneeb and I were eating dinner in the street, near his home. When we finished, Muneeb took the plates into the house, and I washed my hands. Moments later, Muneeb came out of the house to play, and that is when the shell struck."⁽⁴³⁾

The location where the shell struck was around 7 meters away from them. Muqbil adds: "I turned to see Muneeb, and I saw him on the ground in the same spot that we had just eaten dinner. I could not understand what had happened, and the people of the neighborhood told me that I was bleeding from my stomach. I did not feel anything at the time because of the shock and fear. It was a horrifying experience, and all I could hear were the voices and the crying of the women and children. Osama, Muneeb's cousin, came out, and so did Muneeb's father. They were chewing Qat at the time. Osama with the help of some young guys from the neighborhood transported us to Al-Rawdhah Hospital. Muneeb had died instantly, and I was given first aid at Al-Rawdhah

(42) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Ali, 6 September 2015.

(43) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Muhammad Muhsin Muqbil, 6 September 2015.

Hospital.”⁽⁴⁴⁾

Muqbil also said that, on that day, four shells had struck Al-Dhahiriyah neighborhood, and three of them were separated by short periods of time. The first fell on the home of Abdoh Sharaf at around sunset; and the second fell around half an hour later near the entrance of Al-Dhahiriyah neighborhood. There were no victims. The third shell fell on Al-Jabartiah Cemetery at the same time as the second shell, and the fourth fell near the home of Jameel Ameen.

According to the interviews that were conducted by Mwatana, there were no armed men in the area at the time of the shelling. The interviews included testimony that the shelling of the area had increased after the Popular Resistance got control of the Cairo Castle on Sunday, August 23, 2015. Cairo Castle is around 400 meters from the location of the incident. Ansar Allah (Houthis) launches the shells from a number of areas, including Hawban and the Sofitel Tourist Hotel, where the group’s fighters are stationed.

The Al Masbah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 19 September 2015:

On Saturday, the 19th of September 2015, at around 5:30 PM, a shell fell on the Farah Shopping Center, which is in Al-Masbah neighborhood in Al-Mudhaffar district, around 700 meters to the north of the center of the city. This shell killed no less than five civilians, including two women, and injured three civilians, including two children.

A section of Farah mall is located inside the Taiz Tourist Club. Mwatana found out that armed groups loyal to Brigadier General Sadiq Sarhan, one of the prominent military leaders in Taiz loyal to Hadi, had been occupying the Club, and members of these armed groups were seen walking around the neighborhood on a regular basis.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Mohammed Jamal Almaqtari (15 years old) who in the incident sustained injuries that left him paralyzed from the waist down and the brother of Amjad Jamal Almaqtari (18 years old) who is one of the people killed in the same incident says: “At around 5:30 PM, I was working inside Farah Mall, and my brother, Amjad, was next to me. We were about to close down after we heard shells falling near the area we were in. The security supervisor asked all of the workers to leave the Mall, and Mona Sultan Saeed Thabet, and her daughter Marwah Abdullah Ali Al Sabri (residents of the neighborhood), came in moments before we closed. They insisted and said that they had to buy some things. I went back into the store with them, and we heard something that sounded like thunder. I fell to the ground and saw smoke filling the place. Marwah was screaming, and when I could finally see, I saw that Amjad had fallen to the ground, and that his head had been split open. My heart hurt when I saw him, but the rest of my body felt nothing. I yelled for my brother in horror, and I tried to get up to hold him, but I was unable to do so. I saw Marwah’s body on her mother’s body, and she was screaming while bleeding from her back.”⁽⁴⁶⁾

Al-Maqtari adds: “The people took us all to Al-Rawdhah Hospital, and I was with Marwah on

(44) See previous footnote.

(45) Sadiq Sarhan is one of the military leaders in Taiz loyal to President Hadi, and he is the head of the military council of one of the groups in the Popular Resistance in Taiz.

(46) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Jamal Al Maqtari, 2 March 2016.

the same truck. She kept screaming the shahada (the Islamic creed) and she died next to me before we reached the hospital. I believe that the shells came from the Al Salal Hill, which is controlled by the Houthis (it is near Al-Qasr Intersection, and is around 3.5 kilometers from the location of the incident). They were targeting the Club, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance, but no one there was hurt. All of the people that were killed and injured were civilians.”⁽⁴⁷⁾

Maha Abdullah Ali Al Sabri (30 years old), the daughter of Muna Sultan Saeed Thabet (50 years old) and the sister of Marwah Abdullah Ali Al Sabri (20 years old), both of whom were killed in the incident, says: “We heard the sound of shells exploding at around 5:30 or 6:00 PM. Despite the explosions, my mother went out shopping in Farah Mall with Marwah. I was very worried because something felt off. I heard the sound of a shell exploding around five minutes after they went out, and I kept waiting for them to come back until I got the news that they had been injured, and that they had been taken to the hospital. I went out running to go find them, and I saw my mother with injuries from shrapnel in her head. She had died instantly. Marwah had shrapnel injuries that had caused a large open wound on her back, in addition to shrapnel injuries all over the rest of her body. I do not know the truth of where the shells came from, or anything else about them”⁽⁴⁸⁾

Amjad Abood Muhammad Muhammad (17 years old), one of the people that were injured, and the son of Abood Muhammad Muhammad (45 years old), one of the people that were killed, works in Al-Muntazah grocery store, which is around 35 meters from the Taiz Tourist Club. Muhammad says: “The shells starting falling on the neighborhood between 5:15 and 6:00 PM, and, at the time, my father was next to me. When he heard the shells falling on Farah Mall, and he saw the smoke rising, he hurried with his friend, Tariq Abdulraheem Al Hazmi (25 years old), to Farah Mall. They took out the people that were killed or injured to their cars and took them to the hospital. After they returned, and when they were near the grocery store washing their hands, a shell fell near them, and they were killed. I went out to see my father, and I saw him on the ground, bleeding. He had been injured by shrapnel under his left ear. He was trying to tell me something, but he could not speak. I was injured by two pieces of shrapnel in my right thigh and left shoulder, but I did not feel anything at the time. I took my father and his friend to Al-Rawdhah Hospital, and, after that, we buried them in Al-Ajeenat Cemetery.”⁽⁴⁹⁾

On that day, at least seven shells struck between 5:30 and 9 PM. The first shell fell on Al-Hazmi grocery store, which is around 300 meters from Farah Mall. The second shell fell on the Mall, the third on the main street in Al-Masbah neighborhood, which is around 450 meters from the Mall. The fourth shell fell on a building near the park, near the Taiz Tourist Club. The fifth fell on Deluxe and Lower Al-Masbah intersection, the sixth on Farah Mall again at around 8:30 PM, and the last one fell on the Al Dharbah neighborhood, which is around 300 meters from Al-Masbah neighborhood.

(47) See previous footnote.

(48) Interview by Mwatana with Maha Abdullah Ali Al Sabri, 2 March 2016.

(49) Interview by Mwatana with Amjad Abood Muhammad Muhammad, 2 March 2016.

Al Thawrah School Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 13 October 2015:

On Tuesday, the 13th of October 2015, at around 5:30 PM, a shell fell on children who were playing in an alleyway in the Al Thawrah School neighborhood in the Al Qahirah district, around 500 meters to the south of the center of the city. The shell killed one child and injured no less than eight. The neighborhood is under the control of the Popular Resistance.

The child, Fareed Shawqi Al Dhammari (6 years old), who was well known for his plead “Don’t bury me”, did not know that he would be killed by a shell while playing with other kids in his neighborhood.

Su’ad Rashad Muhammad Abdullah (23 years old), the mother of Fareed Shawqi Al Dhammari and Haytham Shawqi Al Dhammari (4 years old), who was also injured during the incident, says: “Fareed went out to play in the street, like he usually does, with the children of the neighborhood. They played near Abdelfattah Kadeemah building, and a shell fell. All of the children ran away, except for Fareed, who froze out of fear. His father was asleep at the time of the explosion, and he was woken up by the explosion. He went out to look for his children. My husband saw Loai Muhammad Dirham (3 years old), who had been injured, and he took him to the hospital. He did not realize that his son, Fareed, was also injured. Our neighbor, Muhammad Sadiq, took Fareed to Al-Rawdhah Hospital, and he told my husband that our son was there. Fareed was transferred from Al-Rawdhah Hospital to Al-Thawrah Hospital.”⁽⁵⁰⁾

Fareed was crying in the hospital kept telling the hospital staff “do not bury me”.⁽⁵¹⁾ He died on Saturday, the 17th of October 2015, four days after he was injured.⁽⁵²⁾

Al Qahirah and Al Mudhaffar Districts, 21 October 2015:

On Wednesday, the 21st of October 2015, at around 4:30 PM, a number of shells were fired at parts of Al-Qahirah and Al-Mudhaffar districts, in the middle of the city of Taiz. These shells killed no less than 11 civilians, including two children and a woman, and injured no less than 29 civilians, including a woman and four children.

The areas that were targeted by these bloody attacks were under the control of the Popular Resistance. After analyzing the pictures of the remnants of the weapons used in the attack, it was concluded that they were 122 mm M-21 rockets that were fired from a BM-21 Grad rocket launcher. Only Ansar Allah and Saleh’s forces have these rockets.⁽⁵³⁾

Muhammad Ali Muqbil Al Zuraiqi (25 years old), the husband of Sawsan Muhammad Ali Al Awadhi (20 years old), who was injured in the incident, says: “Sawsan went out at around 4 in the afternoon to the market on Al Tahrir Street (in the middle of the city). She went out with her friend, Sumayah Ahmad Ali Ghaleb (17 years old) to buy new clothes for Sumayah for her high

(50) Interview by Mwatana with Su’ad Rashad Muhammad Abdullah, 18 October 2015.

(51) He said ‘Please don’t bury me’ in the local Taizi dialect.

(52) Mwatana got a copy of the Fareed Al Dhammari’s death certificate from the Al Thawrah Hospital in Taiz.

(53) Mwatana has pictures of the remnants of the munitions used.

school exams. While they were in the market, a shell fell and killed Sumayah instantly. Sawsan was badly wounded.”⁽⁵⁴⁾

Al Zuraiqi adds: “Al Tahrir Street, where the shell hit, was a popular market, and there were no clashes, military checkpoints, or military vehicles there.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

Waleed Saeed Ahmad (28 years old), who is one of the people injured says: “I left the house and went, in the afternoon, to the central market (in the middle of the city), at around 4:00 PM. I went to buy some vegetables. I heard loud explosions at 4:30 PM, and I started running. People were in a state of horror, and everyone was running. I did not know that I would be running close to where the shell struck. A shell fell near me, and I do not know where it fell, exactly. Smoke was rising from the area, and shrapnel hit me in different parts of my body. There were other people who were injured near me. I do not know why this area was targeted; it is not a place that had seen fighting. The security checkpoints that are under the control of the Popular Resistance militants are far from this area, and the nearest checkpoint is in the area of Saynah and Al-Dahi (around 4 to 5 kilometers away).”⁽⁵⁶⁾

Zainab Ali Abdullah Saif (20 years old), who was living, with her family, in one of the apartments of the Qasr Himyar Hotel in the central market area, alongside four other families who had been displaced from the Al Wa’sh Mountain (around 7 kilometers to the north of the center of the city) because of the clashes there, says: “At 4:30 PM, I heard loud explosions that were near. We were very scared, and we ran out of the apartment into the hotel hallway. We were staying the floor under the top floor of the hotel, but the shell went through the roof of the hotel and the top floor, and it reached the hallway. A number of people and I were injured. We were taken, within minutes, to the Al Thawrah Hospital.”⁽⁵⁷⁾

Ismael Muhammad Naji (30 years old), who saw Arafat Muhammad Abdullah Al Shahmi (35 years old) get injured and Ammar Muhammad Abdullah Al Shahmi (25 years old) get killed, says: “Arafat was, as usually, working in a store on 26th of September Street (around 700 meters to the southwest of the center of the city). Between 4:00 and 4:30 in the afternoon, Arafat and Ammar were standing in front of the store. A shell fell near the area they were standing in. The explosion pushed Arafat and Ammar to the other side of the street. Arafat was badly wounded and burned all over his body, while Ammar died. We only found the top half of his body on the street. They were both taken on a car to the Al Thawrah Hospital. There were no armed men in the area, and there were no security checkpoints manned by the Popular Resistance on the 26th of September Street.”⁽⁵⁸⁾

Omar Muneer Ameen (12 years old), who is one of the people injured during the incident, says: “I was walking down the street, on my way to buy vegetables and other groceries from the central market, when I heard the sound of a loud explosion near the market. I ran away, and while I was running down the street, there was a second explosion, and it was stronger than the first

(54) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Ali Al Zuraiqi, 25 October 2015.

(55) See previous footnote.

(56) Interview by Mwatana with Waleed Saeed Ahmad, 25 October 2015.

(57) Interview by Mwatana with Zainab Ali Abdullah Saif, 25 October 2015.

(58) Interview by Mwatana with Ismael Muhammad Naji, 25 October 2015.

explosion. It was very close to me. I fell to the ground and got injured in my stomach. People came and took me to the Al Thawrah Hospital. The market was full of people, like it is every day, and there had been no clashes.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

Regarding the victims of this attack, Naseem Ahmad Ali (27 years old), who is a nurse in the emergency unit in the Al Thawrah Public Hospital, says: “At around 4:30 PM, we got around 30 people who were injured, and four who had been killed, in groups. A number of them were children and women, and most of the injuries were bad. For example, one of them had been badly hurt in their head, and another was completely burned. A third’s hand was cut off, and there were many cases like these.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

Ahmad Abdulqadir Al Dumaini (27 years old), who is a doctor in the Al Thawrah Public Hospital, says: “We were surprised by a number of successive explosions that shook the whole city. One of these explosions was around 300 meters from the hospital. After around 15 minutes, a number of cars with bodies and injured people reached the hospital, and they were taken to the emergency room. I arrived at the emergency room at the same time as 2 people who had died, and more than 10 who had been injured. They were civilians, and they included women and children. A number of minutes later, the number of cases increased to 30 injured and 3 killed. The fourth person died while we were preparing to operate on them. They were injured by shrapnel in their heads, chests, limbs, of abdomens. Blood and shredded flesh filled the hospital. One of them came to us with a large open wound in their chest, and his feet were shredded. Another had pieces of shrapnel that had gone through his head, and a third only had his top half taken to the hospital, and he was already dead.”⁽⁶¹⁾

Al Dahi Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 16 November 2015:

On Monday, the 16th of November 2015, at around 3:30 AM, a shell fell on the Al Dahi neighborhood in the Al Mudhaffar district, around 2.5 kilometers to the west of the center of the city, and it killed no less than five civilians and injured two others.

When Mwatana visited the location of the incident, the area was witnessing clashes between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Popular Resistance, and heavy and medium weapons.⁽⁶²⁾ Mwatana found, at the location of the incident, the remnants of the weapon that was used. After analyzing it, it became clear that it was a highly explosive mortar shell.⁽⁶³⁾

Hussam Sultan Saeed (25 years old), whose father was killed during this incident, says: “The incident took place near Anas mosque in Al-Dahi neighborhood. Most of the clashes and shelling between the Resistance and the Houthis happen during the night, and the nearest Popular Resistance security checkpoint is 100 meters away. The resistance fighters are concentrated on

(59) Interview by Mwatana with Omar Muneer Ameen, 25 October 2015.

(60) Interview by Mwatana with Naseem Ahmad Ali, 25 October 2015.

(61) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Abdulqadir Al Dumaini, 25 October 2015.

(62) Mwatana visited the site on the 3rd of March 2016, before the Popular Resistance took control of the whole area around the 10th of March 2016.

(63) Mwatana has pictures of the remnants of the munitions used.

the eastern side of Al-Khaw'ah Hill (around 200 meters from the location of the incident), while the Houthis fighters are on the northern side of the hill (around 200 meters from the location of the incident).”(64)

Hussam adds: “My father was with the rest of our neighbors who were killed during this incident. They were chewing Qat on a terrace in the street. Suddenly, a shell fell, and it killed four people: my father, Sultan Saeed Othman (50 years old), Saeed Saif Mahyoob Abdullah (55 years old), Issa Jameel Ahmad Saeed (20 years old), and Ahmad Abdulhameed Al Alimi (20 years old). In addition to them, a man from the marginalized community “Al Muhamasheen” was killed, and he was around 30 years old. He was walking down the street when the shell struck. Two people were injured: Mukhtar Ahmad Al Shar’abi (23 years old) and Muhammad Fahmi Al Hasbi (28 years old). Around 15 minutes later, another shell fell on the main street, near the Popular Resistance security checkpoint. The windows of the third floor, where we were living, all broke because of the pressure and the shrapnel. I left the house and found my dad, and the people that were with him, all dead. I found them turned into pieces of meat mixed with all the blood, and smoke filled the whole area.”(65)

Bakr Saeed Saif Mahyoob (25 years old), whose father was also killed in the incident, says: “I reached the place of the incident and was shocked by how the bodies looked. I found Mukhtar Al Shar’abi and Muhammad Fahmi still alive. The shell had pushed the dead and injured in different directions.”(66)

The Lower Al Dharbah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 20 November 2015:

On Friday, the 20th of November 2015, at around 6:15 PM, the shelling of the area of Lower Al Dharbah in Al-Mudhaffar district, which is around 1.5 kilometers to the west of the center of the city, led to the injury of no less than three children.

When Mwatana visited the place of the incident, there was a group of armed men belonging to the Popular Resistance, and they were occupying the New Saba School for Boys, which is around 150 meters from the place of the incident. Mwatana found out that the incident took place around half an hour after the end of the meeting of the security committee, which was held inside the local council’s building, which is occupied by the Popular Resistance as well. The local council building is around 70 meters from the location that the shell struck.

Ahmad Ghailan Al Muhammadi (60 years old), who is the father of Malak Ahmad Ghailan Al Muhammadi (10 years old), who was injured during this incident, says: “Malak was coming back from the bakery with Adel Al Ma’mari (9 years old), and I was, at the time, at home. I heard the sound of an explosion and left the house in a hurry towards Al-Rahman mosque. The shell fell on a street paved with stones, and she was injured by the shrapnel. The street was filled with smoke after the shell fell, and most of the people were afraid at the time that another shell would fall, which is usually the case with most incidents of shelling. I took my daughter directly to Al-

(64) Interview by Mwatana with Hussam Sultan Saeed, 3 March 2016.

(65) See previous footnote.

(66) Interview by Mwatana with Bakr Saeed Saif Mahyoob, 3 March 2016.

Thawrah Public Hospital, where she was given first aid, and I went back to my house right away because the hospital was not safe. There are no doctors or medicine in the hospital because of the blockade.”⁽⁶⁷⁾

Al Muhammadi adds that “this area has been targeted more than once in the past without there being any casualties.”⁽⁶⁸⁾

Muhammad Alwan Thabet (64 years old), one of the eyewitnesses that saw the incident, confirms this when he says: “The shell fell when I was leaving the mosque after Maghreb prayer. The sound of the explosion was very loud, and I felt that the pressure from the explosion had affected my ears. Smoke and screams filled the area, and I saw that Malak and Roaa had fallen to the ground. There was another person there that had a head injury, and he was running around screaming out of fear. I found out later on that that person was Yasser Sameer Al Qubati (15 years old).”⁽⁶⁹⁾

Hawdh Al Ashraaf, Al Salh District, 1 December 2015:

On Tuesday, the 1st of December 2015, at around 11:30 AM, shelling of Al-Kuwait mosque in the area of Hawdh Al-Ashraaf in Al-Salh district, around 2 kilometers to the east of the center of the city, led to the death of no less than three children and injured no less than ten civilians, including five children.

The victims of this incident were getting water from one of the water tanks that had been distributed to the residential neighborhoods. These water tanks are filled by charitable people and some relief organizations to ease the hardships of the blockade on the people.

After analyzing the pictures that Mwatana took of the area that the shell hit, it was concluded that the shell was a 60 mm mortar shell, and it came from the east, specifically the Republican Palace. The Republican Palace is around 1.2 kilometers from the area that the shell hit, and it is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).

When Mwatana visited the area of the incident, there was a security checkpoint manned by the Popular Resistance forces around half a kilometer from the area. The Popular Resistance also controlled the Al Harbi Building, a ten-story building. They had been in control of the building since August 2015, and they were using it for military purposes. The Al Harbi Building is around 150 meters from the site of the incident.

Adel Muhammad Al Dhabhani (30 years old), who is the father of Shaima Adel Al Dhabhani (10 years old), a child that was killed in the incident, says: “On that day, people had gathered in the neighborhood, and they were all getting water. Before I went to Al-Rawdhah Hospital for a checkup, my daughter, Shaima, told me that she was going out to get water. When I returned from the hospital, the neighbors told me of the horrible incident and the great loss. My wife did not know that Shaima had died when I went home because the neighbors had told her that she was

(67) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Ghailan Al Muhammadi, 14 February 2016.

(68) See previous footnote.

(69) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Alwan Thabet, 14 February 2016.

just injured. When they told me the truth, I immediately collapsed. I went to say goodbye to my daughter at Al-Thawrah Hospital. ‘Indeed, I am overpowered, so help.’ [Quran, 54:10]”⁽⁷⁰⁾

Shaima’s mother adds: “When Adel came home from Al-Rawdhah Hospital, he told me that Shaima had passed away, and was not coming back. I will never forget the horror that I felt, and I will never forget the death of my little one. I still hear her voice, and she is still living every day with me.”⁽⁷¹⁾

Abduljalil Mahyoob Al Basheeri (50 years old), who is the father of Anas Abduljalil Al Basheeri (7 years old), who was killed in the same incident, says: “I was with Anas and other children from the neighborhood, and we were filling our water containers from the barrels in the street. Suddenly, we heard the sound of a shell exploding near that area that we were in. I tried to look around and see where it fell, when I heard the sound of another shell exploding. I looked back, and I could only see smoke. I rushed to save Anas, who had been very happy because he was filling the water himself, but I found him not moving and with blood running down his face and covering it. He had been hit by the shrapnel. I took him to Al-Thawrah Hospital, and there they told me that he had already died. I do not know how Allah gave me the power to be strong in the face of my wife and children breaking down after losing Anas. I have not despaired, and I will never stop trying to get justice for my son. I wrote the names of the martyrs and people that were injured on the empty water bottles and hung them on the site of the attack to say: ‘Here, a shell struck and took the souls of children that were filled with life.’ Ever since the Houthi and Saleh militants came to Taiz, our lives and the city itself have been turned into hell. Everything has changed. Some people have lost their jobs and homes, some people have been forced to close their businesses, and others have lost their cars. Living in this city has become hell.”⁽⁷²⁾

Abdullah Ali Al Khulaidi (45 years old), who is one of the people injured in this incident, says: “I was close to my family, who were getting water, and I heard a shell explode, but I did not know where it had fallen. Then, another shell fell, and it struck the people that were filling water from the water tank. Three children were killed: Shaima, Anas, and Asmaa Muhammad Ghanem (15 years old), in addition to the people that were injured, like myself. I did not feel at the time that I had been injured until I noticed that I was bleeding out of my head. I will never forget when I saw Asmaa, who was not from our neighborhood, and had come here to get water. I told her, before the shell struck, not to go back to her house empty-handed; that there was good drinking water here and that she could get some and take it home. When the shell struck, Asmaa’s soul left instantly.”⁽⁷³⁾

Mount Al Shamasi, Al Qahirah District, 3 December 2015:

On Thursday, the 3rd of December 2015, at around 4:30 PM, a shell fell on a home in front of the Yemen School, which is on Mount Al Shamasi in Al-Qahirah district, around 1.5 kilometers to the east of the center of the city. This shell killed a child and injured one man, two women, and another child.

(70) Interview by Mwatana with Adel Al Dhabhani, 27 February 2016.

(71) Interview by Mwatana with Adel Al Dhabhani’s wife, Um Shaima, 27 February 2016.

(72) Interview by Mwatana with Abduljalil Al Basheeri, 27 February 2016.

(73) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Al Khulaidi, 29 February 2016.

The Yemen School was, at the time, occupied by the Popular Resistance, and it was being used as a command and control center, before it was emptied later on.

Su'ad Abdoh Ammar (55 years old), who was injured during the incident and lost her grandson, Anas Bassam Abdoh Muhammad (11 years old), says: "We were sitting at home, between the stairs and the kitchen. I was with my husband, Abdoh Muhammad Ali (65 years old), and my daughters-in-law, Katibah Taha Muhammad (19 years old) and Aqmar Shafeeq Mansour (15 years old), and Anas. Suddenly, a shell struck our house, and the roof of the house collapsed, as did the stairs, on us. I went into a coma that lasted for two days. When I came out of the coma, they told me that Anas had died and that Katibah was in critical condition. As for my husband and Aqmar, they told me that their situation was not critical. My husband could not stop crying over Anas' death."⁽⁷⁴⁾

Aqmar says: "When the shell exploded, I yelled at the top of my lungs, and I heard my mother-in-law screaming. Anas was next to me when the house collapsed on us, and rocks fell on my head. I woke up in the hospital. I found out that Anas had gotten burned, and that his body was riddled with shrapnel. He had died instantly. I remembered that before I had passed out, I saw my father-in-law, who had a head injury, and he was screaming 'Anas is dead!'. "⁽⁷⁵⁾

Katibah says: "My face and hair were burned, and shrapnel filled my body. I underwent a number of surgeries, and was in a coma for 13 days."⁽⁷⁶⁾

Sinan Intersection, Al Qahirah District, 5 December 2015:

On Monday, the 5th of December 2015, at around 9:00 PM, a shell fell in front of the Taiz Cafeteria on Sinan Intersection in Al-Qahirah district, which is around 700 meters to the north of the center of the city. This shell killed no less than four civilians and wounded seven others.

The neighborhood was under the control of the Popular Resistance, and the victims were people from the villages of Tehama in Al-Hudaydah governorate, and they were working in the Taiz Cafeteria.

Sultan Ayash Omar (27 years old), who is a friend of the victims and their roommate, says: "I was in our room, near the cafeteria. At around 9:00 PM, while I was leaving work at the cafeteria, I heard the sound of a shell exploding. I went out in a hurry to see what had happened, and I found Salman Qassim (25 years old) and Makram Ali Naji Othman (21 years old), and their bodies had been completely shredded. I found Abdulrahman Sulaiman Hizam (32 years old) and Tayyib Yahya Salman (25 years old) dead, and their bodies were riddled with wounds from shrapnel. Tayyib had gotten married just two months before. As for the people that were injured, they were in indescribable conditions. The car that was blown up by the shell in front of the cafeteria burned, and so did my motorcycle, which was near the car. The motorcycle is my livelihood, and it was

(74) Interview by Mwatana with Su'ad Abdoh Amir, 22 February 2016.

(75) Interview by Mwatana with Aqmar Shafeeq Mansour, 22 February 2016.

(76) Interview by Mwatana with Katibah Taha Muhammad, 22 February 2016.

completely destroyed.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

Al Kawthar Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 6 January 2016:

On Wednesday, the 6th of January 2016, at around 5:30 PM, three children were killed and eight others were injured by a shell that fell on Al-Kawthar neighborhood in Al-Qahirah district, around 1.4 kilometers to the east of the center of the city. The children were playing across from the Jordanian University when the shell fell.

Waheeb Muhammad Abdullah (44 years old), the father of Muhammad Waheeb Muhammad (15 years old), who was killed in the incident, says: “I was on the other side of the street when the shell fell. I heard an explosion and ran to where it fell, and I saw a lot of children on the ground, including my son, Muhammad, Ula Aref Ali Murshid (11 years old), and Haya Aref Ali Murshid (13 years old). A number of children were injured, including Loai Majid (15 years old). If the shell had taken a different course it would have killed all the teens that were on the other side, playing soccer.”⁽⁷⁸⁾

Izzat Abdullatif Al Hammadi (34 years old), who is Muhammad’s uncle, says: “Muhammad was, at the time, on the street, and he was injured by a number of shrapnel pieces all over his body. He died instantly. The neighbor’s daughter, Ula, died on the same day, and her sister died five days later from her injuries.”⁽⁷⁹⁾

The Popular Resistance was in control of the National Institute for Administrative Sciences and the Central Organization for Control and Accountability, which are around 300 meters from the Jordanian University.

Al Kawthar Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 27 January 2016:

On Wednesday, the 27th of January 2016, at around 5:30 PM, a shell fell on Al Huraish Street in the Al Kawthar neighborhood in the Al Qahirah district, around 1.4 kilometers to the east of the center of the city. This shell killed at least one man and three children, and injured 11 people, including four children.

The area that the shell struck is under the control of the Hasm Brigades, which are a part of the Popular Resistance. Mwatana found out, during its research, that armed members of the Hasm Brigade are present in the area from time to time.

It is believed that the shell came from the Republican Palace, which is around 2.5 kilometers from the site of the incident. It is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).

Hani Hamood Hazza (33 years old), who was injured during this incident, says: “I was, at the

(77) Interview by Mwatana with Sultan Ayash Omar, 2 March 2016.

(78) Interview by Mwatana with Waheeb Muhammad Abdullah, 8 March 2016.

(79) Interview by Mwatana with Izzat Abdullatif Al Hammadi, 8 March 2016.

time, playing volleyball with the children of the neighborhood, and, around 10 minutes before the shell struck, I heard a shell fall in Al -shbat neighborhood, which is close to our neighborhood. We did not care, and we kept playing volleyball until we heard a loud explosion, and I saw smoke going up around six meters from where I was. I ran away into one of the alleyways. I was trying to go into my home, but I could not, and I fell to the ground. I saw that I had been injured by shrapnel in my legs and right hand. I saw a number of the people of the neighborhood, people I had just been playing volleyball with, either dead or injured. I was taken to Al-Thawrah Hospital.”⁽⁸⁰⁾

Abdulqadir Nasher Al Areeqi (65 years old), who was also injured during the incident, says: “I was near them while they were playing, and I heard a loud explosion that scared me. I stayed in my place because the smoke was so thick, and it was hard to see anything. I could not move. When the smoke went away, I saw bodies and blood all over the street. One of the people from the neighborhood told me that I was bleeding from my back, but I had not felt any pain at all. I was taken to the Department of Surgery in Al-Thawrah Hospital and found out that I had shrapnel wounds in my lower back.”⁽⁸¹⁾

Al Areeqi adds: “I cannot describe the horror of what I saw. People that I was just, minutes before, watching play, full of life and energy, had become body parts. I saw Rammah Adel Al Athwari (13 years old) and Suhail Sameer Al Qubati (15 years old) among the dead, and Tayyib Abdulmumin Al Azzani (17 years old), Eyad Muhammad Al Maqtari (45 years old), and Najm Al Deen Al Qadasi (17 years old) among the injured.”⁽⁸²⁾

Al Ashrafiyah, Al Mudhaffar District, 30 January 2016:

On Saturday, the 30th of January 2016, at around 10:00 PM, a shell fell in the area of Al Ashrafiyah in Al Mudhaffar district, around 1 kilometer to the south of the center of the city. The shell killed Wael Issam Al Hirwi (25 years old).

Mwatana found out that Abu Al Abbas’ brigades, which are a part of the Popular Resistance, were in control of the Hayel Complex School for Girls. The school is around 60 meters from the site where Wael was killed, and it seems like the school was the target of the shells.⁽⁸³⁾

Fareed Issam Al Hirwi (18 years old), Wael’s brother, says: “My brother was near the house with a number of kids, and they were just hanging out. While they were going to the grocery store, a shell fell on the wall of the second floor of Abdulghani Al Hirwi’s home, which is near our home. I heard the sound of the explosion, and there was strong tremor when the shell fell. At the time, I was in the house, and when I went out, I saw smoke. It was a huge shock when I saw Wael on the ground, covered in blood. Abdullah Abdulaziz Al Mujahid (35 years old), took him to Al Rawdhah Hospital. There, he was admitted to ICU because the shrapnel entered his forehead,

(80) Interview by Mwatana with Hani Hamood Hazza, 14 August 2016.

(81) Interview by Mwatana with Abdulqadir Nasher Al Areeqi, 14 August 2016.

(82) See previous footnote.

(83) The Hayel Complex School for Girls is one of the schools mentioned in this report under the chapter titled “Occupying Schools and Using Them for Military Purposes”.

his right hand, and his right thigh. Wael died at 1:30 AM on Sunday, the 31st of January 2016.”⁽⁸⁴⁾

Al Hirwi adds: “Around half an hour after the shell that killed my brother Wael fell, another shell fell near Al Mudhaffar Masjid. Half an hour after the second shell fell, a third shell fell near Hayel Complex School for Girls. The neighborhood was emptied because of the repeated shelling of the area.”⁽⁸⁵⁾

Al Nasiriya, Al Mudhaffar District, 2 February 2016:

On Tuesday, the 2nd of February 2016, at around 5:30 PM, a shell fell on the home of Ali Al Emad in the area of Al Nasiriya in Al Mudhaffar district, around 2.2 kilometers to the west of the center of the city. This shell killed at least one man and four children, and injured no less than 12 others, including nine children and two women.

This area is around 500 meters from the site of the Political Security Organization, where the Popular Resistance is stationed. When Mwatana visited the area, there were clashes, and a number of vehicles with armed men from the Popular Resistance were seen driving around the area. Remnants from a previous attack on water well were found behind the house that was targeted. The well was under the control of the popular resistance and the testimony of the local people confirmed that that that remnants were from previous attacks on the well.

Ahmad Abdullah Sinan Al Wasabi (35 years old), the father of Reemas Ahmad Al Wasabi (6 years old), who was killed in the incident, says: “On Tuesday, the 2nd of February 2016, at around 5:30 PM, I was chewing Qat in front of the house of Ali Al Emad, and there was a large number of children playing in front of the house. Around 5 minutes before the shell fell, around 20 children had left the place. The family of Ali Al Emad, who were inside the house, were injured, in addition to the children and men that were on the street. I did not feel anything when the shell exploded. The area around the home of Ali Al Emad was dark, and the sound of the explosion was loud. There was thick smoke everywhere, and I felt like I was in the middle of a tornado.”

“The street was covered in blood, and children’s bodies were all over the street. The place was covered in water as well because the water tank in the street was damaged in the incident. Shrapnel from the shell flew all over the neighborhood, some of it reaching more than 50 meters away,” added Al Wasabi.⁽⁸⁶⁾

It is believed that the source of the shell is Al Salal Hill to the east, which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis), and the shelling is believed to be a response to canons and anti-aircraft fire from the Popular Resistance before the shell fell. The Popular Resistance was shooting from the Political Security Organization base, which they control, and that building is behind Al Emad’s house.

According to the testimony of the local people, the shelling carried out by the Popular Resistance from the Political Security Organization premises was ongoing and that patrolling

(84) Interview by Mwatana with Fareed Al Hirwi, 10 February 2016.

(85) See previous footnote.

(86) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Al Wasabi, 8 February 2016.

the neighborhoods in their cars causes the violent response that targeted the Political Security Organization and the nearby neighborhoods.

Al Wasabi says: “I believe that the source of the shell was Al Salal Hill to the east (which is around 6.5 kilometers from the site of the incident), and where Ansar Allah (Houthis) are stationed. Another reason for this area being targeted could be the charitable well that is behind the house of Ali Al Emad, which is under the control of Abu Al Abbas⁽⁸⁷⁾, the leader of the eastern front of the Popular Resistance. This well has been targeted before.”⁽⁸⁸⁾

Mwatana also talked to Ali Abdoh Muhammad Al Emad (54 years old), the owner of the house and the father of Ibrahim Ali Al Emad (6 years old), Ridha Ali Al Emad (9 years old), Waseem Ali Al Emad (16 years old), and Rehab Ali Al Emad (15 years old), all of whom were injured.

Al Emad says: “I was, at the time, in the mosque near my house. I heard the sound of a whistle, and shortly after, I felt tremors from the explosion. I went out to where the explosion was, and smoke covered everything. When I arrived, I saw that the front facing side of my house had been damaged, and a number of the people from the neighborhood and passersby had been killed. Among the people that were injured are members of my family, who were in one of the rooms of the house. I took my wife, Fakhiah Ahmad Abdoh Abdullah (35 years old) to Al Hikmah Hospital. As for the rest of the children, Ahmad Fadhil took them to Al Rawdhah Hospital. They were given first aid and discharged the same day, except for Ibrahim, who was released the next day, because the hospital was crowded, and there were not enough beds. Azizah Muhammad Teen (10 years old) was among the people who were injured, and she is still in Al Thawrah Hospital. She had an operation to remove shrapnel from her left shoulder. It was horrifying when I saw the blood, children’s bodies, and the members of my family on the ground.”⁽⁸⁹⁾

Mwatana talked to Qayed Mansour Saeed (40 years old), the father of Badee’ Qayed Mansour Saeed (6 years old), who was killed in the incident.

Saeed says: “I was not there when the shell struck, and when I arrived to the site of the incident after the injured had been taken to the hospitals, there was still blood and body parts all over the place from the bodies of the people who had been killed. The scene was very shocking and brutal, and I was even more shocked when I found out that my son was one of the victims whose body parts were all over the place. He died instantly. His remnants were taken to Al Hikmah Hospital, and I went to receive his body from there. I buried him on the same day in the Al Ujainat Cemetery after the night prayer. This shelling killed my son and a number of others. They are Adel Abdoh Muhammad Saeed (35 years old), Rawan Muhammad Abdoh Saeed (two and a half years old), Reemas Ahmad Al Wasabi (6 years old), and another person that I do not know. A lot of people were injured as well.”⁽⁹⁰⁾

(87) Abu Al Abbas is the *kunya* (teknonymy) of the leader of an armed group that is a part of the Popular Resistance in Taiz.

(88) See previous footnote.

(89) Interview by Mwatana with Ali Al Emad, 8 February 2016.

(90) Interview by Mwatana with Qayed Mansour Saeed, 9 February 2016.

The Saynah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 17 February 2016:

On Wednesday, the 17th of February 2016, at around 4:00 PM, indiscriminate shelling of the Saynah neighborhood in Al Mudhaffar district, around 4 kilometers to the southwest of the center of the city, led to the death of at least three children, and injured at least two women.

The area is around 500 meters from the Political Security Organization, and 600 meters from Al Safeenah Hill. The Popular Resistance controls both sites. According to the testimony that was collected by Mwatana's team, it is believed that the shells that struck the neighborhood came from the Air Defense Base, which is around 4.5 kilometers from the neighborhood. When Mwatana visited the site of the incident, there was some fire coming from that area.

Nabeel Abdoh Qassim (45 years old), the father of Malak Nabeel Abdoh Qassim (7 years old) and Ruaa Nabeel Abdoh Qassim (11 years old), both of whom were killed in the incident, says: "I was working in the barbershop, and I heard the explosion of the shell. I went out of my shop to see where it had landed, and I was surprised to find that it had hit the house of our neighbor, Fahdl Muhammad Abdullah, near where I was. The people of the neighborhood told me that my two daughters were killed, and that my wife, Aisha Sinan Saeed, had been injured by the shrapnel. I saw Malak with an injury on her head, and her face had been completely disfigured. I could not see her facial features anymore, and her legs had been shredded. It was the same for Ruaa's body; she had been turned into shredded meat. They took out my neighbor's daughter, Khawlah Fahdl Muhammad Abdullah (3 years old), and the back part of her body was gone. Body parts from the three girls were collected in plastic bags and taken to Al Rawdhah Hospital."⁽⁹¹⁾

Mahfoudh Fadhl Muhammad (19 years old) says: "I was hanging out with my friends in the neighborhood, and, suddenly, I heard the sound of an explosion and saw smoke going up from our house. My friends were yelling that the shell had hit our house. I tried to stay in control of myself, and I went with the neighbors and I found my mom screaming, and I saw my sister, Khawlah, as well as Malak and Ruaa. They were in pieces. It was a difficult situation to describe. The front part of the house had been completely destroyed. I believe the reason that the shells hit our house is that we are near Al Safeenah Hill, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance, and the Air Defense Base, which is facing the direction of our house and so every time there is shelling from the Air Defense Base, which is under the control of the Houthis, towards the Al Safeenah Hill, the shells land in our neighborhood."⁽⁹²⁾

Ashjan Fadhl Muhammad (23 years old), the sister of the deceased child, Khawlah, was inside the house that the shell struck. Ashjan says, describing what happened that day: "Khawlah, Ruaa, and Malak were with my mother, Hadiyah Sultan Muhammad Qayed (45 years old). They were playing in the bedroom, and the first shell hit that room. The three girls died instantly. I lost consciousness after the explosion, and, seconds later, I regained consciousness and heard my mother screaming hysterically. Then, I saw the horrible scene of the three girls in shreds. The bodies of Khawlah and Malak were stuck together, and Ruaa's head was open."⁽⁹³⁾

Ashjan mentioned that the ambulance was around half an hour late because two shells had

(91) Interview by Mwatana with Nabeel Abdoh Qassim, 18 February 2016.

(92) Interview by Mwatana with Mahfoudh Fadhl Muhammad, 18 February 2016.

(93) Interview by Mwatana with Ashjan Fadhl Muhammad, 18 February 2016.

fallen minutes after the first shell, and that the two other shells did not cause any casualties.

Al Dharbah Neighborhood, Al-Mudhaffar District, 19 February 2016:

On Friday, the 19th of February 2016, at around 3:00 PM, a shell fell on Al Dharbah neighborhood, near the Iraqi School on Al Dharbah Street in Al-Mudhaffar district, around 1.5 kilometers to the west of the center of the city. The shell killed a child and injured eight civilians, including another child.

The shell fell on the house of Ali Abdulmughni in a two-story residential building. The site of the incident is around 40 meters from the building of the Islah Party's headquarters, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Hamza Muhammad Abdoh (33 years old), who was affected and in pain by the killing of his son, Basheer (6 years old), says: "I was, at the time, in the communication shop that I work in, and I heard the sound of a shell exploding. I prayed that everyone was ok, and that no one had gotten hurt. Minutes after the explosion, my cousin, Muhammad Mahyoob came to the shop, and he looked very scared. I asked him why he had come, and he could only say: 'Basheer...' I realized that something bad had happened to my son, Basheer, who was outside of his grandfather's house playing with his friends from the neighborhood. I started crying, and I arrived at Al Rawdhah Hospital after they had already put him in the morgue refrigerator. I opened the refrigerator and saw that he had been slaughtered, and his head had been separated from his body, while his back was riddled with holes. I will never forget that image as long as I live. That morning, Basheer had told me: 'Dad, I am traveling to Aden and I will not return. A big car will come and take me to Aden.'"⁽⁹⁴⁾ The father started crying uncontrollably when he started remembering what his young son had told him on the morning of that day, and he could not complete the interview.

Sulaiman Abdulmalik Saleh (37 years old), whose brother, Hisham Abdulmalik Saleh (38 years old), was injured in the incident, says: "I was at home and I heard the sound of a shell exploding. It was very loud. I went out to make sure that my kids were okay because they were playing in the neighborhood at the time, and I saw my brother, Hisham, right in front of me, and it looked like he had gotten slaughtered. He was bleeding profusely because he had been injured by shrapnel to his lower jaw and neck, and shrapnel had also hit him in his left thigh and right leg. I took him to Al Rawdhah Hospital, where they tried to stop the bleeding after Al Hikmah Hospital and Al Thawrah Hospital refused to take him. The doctors told me that he was in critical condition, and they put him in the ICU."⁽⁹⁵⁾

Ma'moon Saeed Mahyoob (40 years old), the father of Raidan (4 years old), who was injured, says: "I was chewing Qat at home, and Raidan came to ask for my permission to go out and play with his friends. I said no at first, but he cried and insisted on going out, and I allowed him. Moments after he went out, I heard a very loud explosion, and I jumped up and ran out without even thinking about it. I was looking for my son and praying to Allah that he was alright. I was surprised to find, as soon as I left the house, my neighbor, Hisham bleeding on the ground. Next to

(94) Interview by Mwatana with Hamza Muhammad Abdoh, 20 February 2016.

(95) Interview by Mwatana with Sulaiman Abdulmalik Saleh, 20 February 2016.

him was the body of Basheer Hamza, whose body had been completely torn apart. I saw my son, Raidan, on the ground next to Basheer, and his face and body were covered in blood, so I assumed that he was dead. I carried him while screaming ‘Raidan is dead! Take Raidan to the hospital!’ I was running around looking for a car to take him to the hospital, and I was able to take him to Al Hikmah Hospital, then Al Rawdhah Hospital, where they put him directly in the ICU. Raidan had injuries in his skull, and shrapnel had gone into his right palm and right leg. He is still in a coma in the ICU. It was a horrible day, and the image of Basheer Hamza torn apart on the ground is still on my mind.”⁽⁹⁶⁾

Mu’taz Hamood Ahmad (29 years old), who is one of the people that were injured during the same incident, says: “I was, before the shell fell, sitting with my friends under the building that the shell hit, and when it exploded it made a horrifying sound. I felt pain in my head. I looked around, and saw my friends who were with me. I saw that Mahmoud Saeed Hassan Al Zaghroori (48 years old) and Nader Fuad Ali (24 years old) were bleeding, and I was worried about them. Mahmoud was able to get up and run away, but Nader was unable to move. I tried to carry him and take him to the hospital, but the pain in my head was getting worse. I realized that he was bleeding, and that I was bleeding as well. I was bleeding from my left side. I was able to go to the hospital, and I brought Nader with me, on a bus owned by one of the people from the neighborhood. They took us to Al Hikmah Hospital, then we were taken to Al Rawdhah Hospital. At the time, there were no armed men, and all of the victims were civilians. We thank Allah that the shell fell at that time because if it had struck an hour later it would have killed tens of children who usually came out to play at that time.”⁽⁹⁷⁾

The Saynah Neighborhood, Al Mudhaffar District, 11 March 2016:

In the afternoon of Friday, the 11th of March, 2016, at 3:30 PM, a shell fell in Saynah neighborhood in Al-Mudhaffar district, around 4 kilometers to the southwest of the center of the city. The shell killed three men and injured two women.

The Popular Resistance is in control of Al-Safeenah Hill, which is around 200 meters from the site, and it is believed that the hill was the intended target.

Omran Hasan Saleh (27 years old), says: “The incident took place on Friday at 3:30 in the PM. At the time, I was sitting in front of the Saynah Educational Complex, and two shells had fallen before this one around 70 meters from the site. There was a period of around three or four minutes between the first and second shells. Most of the people of the neighborhood had gone out to see the effects of the first two shells, and the third shell fell near us. There was a large explosion, and the air was filled with smoke, making it hard to see. I saw Saddam Ahmad Muhammad (55 years old) on the ground, and a woman that I did not know was on the ground next to him. I also saw Muhammad Hussein (47 years old) with his intestines outside his body, and Mahyoob Farhan (65 years old) bleeding out of his head and stomach. They were taken to the hospital by the locals; Al Rawdhah Hospital, but they died.”⁽⁹⁸⁾

(96) Interview by Mwatana with Ma’moon Saeed Mahyoob, 20 February 2016.

(97) Interview by Mwatana with Mu’taz Hamood Ahmad, 20 February 2016.

(98) Interview by Mwatana with Omran Hasan Saleh, 12 March 2016.

Sameer Abdoh Al Afeef (28 years old), who was in the Saynah Educational Complex at the time, says: “I heard the sound of two shells falling on AlSafeenah Hill, near the neighborhood. Then I heard a whistling sound getting closer to the place that I was in, and, after that, I heard an explosion that violently shook the windows of the complex. I went out and saw my friend, Mahyoob, on the ground, and blood covered his whole body. I screamed and went to him, trying to find a pulse. I saw the locals carrying Saddam and Muhammad looking for a car to take them to the hospital. I carried Mahyoob with the help of some of the neighbors, and I took him to the hospital. There, I saw two women in the emergency room, and I was told that they had been injured in the same attack. The target might have been Al Safeenah Hill, which is near the site and is under the control of the Popular Resistance.”⁽⁹⁹⁾

Abdulhameed Abdoh Al Amiri (54 years old), who was also an eyewitness, says: “After the explosion, I looked down from the roof of my house, and I saw smoke going up, and I saw a man bleeding from his stomach. I realized that it was Muhammad Hussein, and I heard someone screaming: “Dad! Dad! Don’t die. Oh people my father has died!” I came down running, and I saw Mahyoob Farhan dead too and two women on the ground.”⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Al Ikhwah Neighborhood, Al Qahirah District, 17 March 2016:

In the afternoon of Thursday, the 17th of March 2016, at around 4:00 PM, a shell fell on a home in Al-Ikhwah neighborhood in Al Qahirah district, around 700 meters to the east of the center of the city, and it killed a child and injured his mother.

Near the house that the shell hit, the Popular Resistance controls Al Ikhwah Hotel, and it is believed that the shell came from the direction of the Sofitel Tourist Hotel which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis), around 5 kilometers away from the neighborhood.

Bushra Fadhl Muhammad Yahiya (29 years old), who is the mother of the child that was killed, Hizam Muhammad Ali Naji (7 years old), says: “At around 4:00 PM, I was changing Hizam’s clothes, and we were getting ready to visit one of our neighbors to offer our condolences to. Suddenly, a shell fell on my house, in the bedroom. The shell ripped Hizam out of my arms, and blew him to the other side of the room. I was injured by shrapnel in my hand, and Hizam died instantly. The shell entered from the eastern side of the house, penetrated the house and exited from the west.”⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Muhammad Ali Naji (34 years old), Hizam’s father, says: “I was at home when the shell fell from the east. I heard my wife screaming, so I went into the room, and I could not see anything because of the smoke. I put my hand on the ground and found Hizam’s feet. Hizam was lying face down. I took him to Al Rawdhah Hospital, but they told me that he was already dead. I praised Allah, and went home to see his mother. She had sustained injuries in her hands when the shell went through the wall of the house.”⁽¹⁰²⁾

(99) Interview by Mwatana with Sameer Abdoh Al Afeef, 12 March 2016.

(100) Interview by Mwatana with Abdulhameed Abdoh Al Amiri, 12 March 2016.

(101) Interview by Mwatana with Bushra Fadhl Muhammad Yahiya, 9 April 2016.

(102) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Ali Naji, 9 April 2016.

■ ■ Section Two: Firing Live Rounds and Anti-Aircraft Shells

The firing of live rounds and anti-aircraft shells in the city of Taiz has caused civilian deaths and injuries. The firing of live rounds happens a lot when there are clashes in residential neighborhoods between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the forces loyal to the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the one side, and the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi on the other side. This has put the lives of many civilians in the city of Taiz in danger.

In many cases, it is difficult to determine the responsible side for killing or injuring civilians. One of the difficulties in documenting civilian casualties in a number of cases is the inability to determine whether the shooting was targeting civilians deliberately, or it was indiscriminate shooting during clashes in residential neighborhoods where the civilian victims fell.

During the period that is covered by this report, civilian victims fell due to shooting live rounds deliberately and indiscriminately, as what was happening in Al Dahi entrance, in the west of the city of Taiz, which was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) until March 2016.

Mwatana has documented the killing of no less than 27 civilians, including seven children and five women, and the injury of no less than 43 civilians, including 16 children and five women, during the period from April 2015 until March 2016.

This report highlights 22 cases in which civilians had fallen killed or injured due to shooting live rounds and anti-craft shells from April 2015 to March 2016. No less than 11 civilians were killed in these cases including 4 children and 4 women and no less than 15 civilians were injured including 7 children and one woman.

■ The Incidents:

Abu Bakr Mansour Abdulhaq (25 years old), who was injured by bullets on May 16, 2015, while he was walking on Al Kawthar Street in Al Qahirah district, says: “I went out of my house at around 6:00 PM. I was going towards the Al Kawthar mosque. There were no clashes but I was surprised when a bullet hit the ground between my feet. I got scared and tried to run away, but another bullet hit my back. Bullets are always falling in our neighborhood. Sometimes they hit water tanks, and sometimes they hit cars. We only walk in alleyways; in streets where there are no clashes; and streets where bullets do not fall. We expect to die at any moment.”⁽¹⁰³⁾

Abdulhaq believes that the source of the bullets was Shamsan Hotel, which is in the area of Hawdh Al Ashraaf. That area overlooks the neighborhood, and it was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

On Saturday, the 27th of June 2015, at around 8:30 PM, an anti-craft shell fell in the Eastern

(103) Interview by Mwatana with Abu Bakr Mansour Abdulhaq, 11 July 2015.

(104) See previous footnote.

neighborhood of Al-Dhaboo'ah in Al-Qahirah district, and it led to the death of a child, Muhammad Hazza Hassan Al Hatimi (16 years old).

Fahmi Ameen Al Jaradi (37 years old), who was one of the eyewitnesses, says: "After Isha'a prayer, Muhammad left the mosque to see where the shell fell. At the time, there was continuous shelling by anti-aircraft cannons, and it had been going on for around 2 hours. While Muhammad was standing near the home of Abdulhabib Salem, an anti-aircraft shell fell around a meter away from him, and he was hit by the shrapnel. People in the area took him to more than one hospital, and he was bleeding profusely. They told me that they took him to Al Rawdhah Hospital, but the hospital refused to take him in because it was already overcrowded. After that, he was taken to the Yemen International Hospital, but it was already too late, and Muhammad was dead."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

In the afternoon of Monday, the 6th of July 2015, Ala'a Muhammad Al Hubaishi (12 years old), was injured by bullets while he was in his home in Al Kawthar neighborhood.

Khalil Muhammad Al Hubaishi (16 years old), Ala'a's brother, says: "At around 4:30 PM, I was at home, and my brother Ala'a was sitting alone near home. Suddenly, I heard a shout, and I went out. I saw him bleeding out of his right thigh. I took him to Al Rawdhah Hospital, and he was transferred to Yemen International Hospital. God sufficeth me! Most Excellent is He in whom we trust. There is no place that is safe, even near our own homes."⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Al Hubaishi said that Al-Rawdhah neighborhood, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance, was the only neighborhood facing the house, and he believes that the bullet came from that direction.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Salem Issa Awadh (65 years old), who sustained a gunshot wound on Friday, the 10th of July 2015, in Al-Kawthar neighborhood, says: "I was in front of the Jordanian University at 7:30 AM, and I was standing next to a tree with another man. Suddenly, I felt something hit my hand. I thought that it was a rock, but my hand was bleeding. I wrapped it with a piece of cloth and went to the hospital."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

In the afternoon of Monday, the 13th of July 2015, Abdulhameed Al Hirwi (27 years old) was wounded by a gunshot on Chamber of Commerce Street in Al-Qahirah district.

Abdullah Al Aqaq, an eyewitness and the guard of the Chamber of Commerce Building, says: "At around 5:00 PM, Abdulhameed was opening the store that he worked in (Al Nadher for Computers), which is in front of the chamber of commerce, where I was. I heard a gunshot, then I saw Abdulhameed shake his shirt. He was bleeding from the right side of his back, under his shoulder. Abdulhameed was taken to Al Rawdhah Hospital by some guys on a motorcycle. This area is an area of clashes between the Popular Resistance and the Houthis, and has been for two days, when the Popular Resistance advanced to in front of the chamber of commerce."⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

(105) Interview by Mwatana with Fahmi Ameen Al Jaradi, 12 July 2015.

(106) Interview by Mwatana with Khalil Muhammad Al Hubaishi, 8 July 2015.

(107) See previous footnote.

(108) Interview by Mwatana with Salem Issa Awadh, 11 July 2015.

(109) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Al Aqeeq, 17 July 2015.

On Saturday, the 18th of July 2015, Shayef Ismael Abdullah Othman (80 years old), was injured by shrapnel from an anti-aircraft shell. The incident took place on Al Huraish Street in the Al Salh district, near the Special Forces Base (Central Security Organization).

Shayef says: “At around 12:00 AM, I was in the room in my house when an anti-aircraft shell struck the window and hit the room’s wall. The shrapnel hit my head, and my son took me to the hospital.”⁽¹¹⁰⁾

In the afternoon of Thursday, the 23rd of July 2015, Amirah Saleh Ghaleb (26 years old) was killed by gunshots while she was in her home. The incident was near the Shawlaq Mosque in Al-Thawrah Hospital neighborhood.

Saleh Ghaleb, one of Amirah’s relatives, says: “At around 3:30 PM, Amirah was in the room overlooking the street when she suddenly fell to the ground, and she was bleeding heavily from her head. It was a horrifying scene for her three children. Amirah was taken to Al-Rawdhah Hospital, and she was transferred to Al-Safwah Hospital. She died there at around 10:30 PM.”⁽¹¹¹⁾

On Wednesday, the 29th of July 2015, Yusuf Muhammad Ahmad Muthana (8 years old) was not spared by the bullets from the indiscriminate shootings by both sides of the conflict.

Yusuf’s mother says: “My son went out in the afternoon to ride his bicycle on the street, like he always did. At around 2:00 PM, I heard a scream, and he was on the ground. People from the neighborhood gathered around him and took him to Al-Safwah Hospital. All praise be to Allah, my son’s condition improved, and he is now at home.”⁽¹¹²⁾

At noon on Tuesday, the 4th of August 2015, Bashar Faisal Ahmad Hazza (10 years old) was injured by gunshots while he was selling from a cart in the market with his cousin, Bashar Ali Saeed (10 years old).

Bashar Ali Saeed says: “I was next to my cousin, Bashar Faisal, and we were working in the market like we usually do. At 1:00 PM, something hit the cart. Bashar screamed, and he said that his left hand felt numb. At that point, I noticed blood coming out of the right side of his chest, and I called my older brother, who took him to Al-Rawdhah Hospital. At the hospital, they told us that the injury was from a bullet, and that it was not deep. He left the hospital that same day.”⁽¹¹³⁾

Clashes between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Popular Resistance in Mashra’a Wa Hadnan district, in July and August of 2015, led to the killing and injuring of a number of civilians from Al-Rumaimah family, including 3 women, because the Popular Resistance was firing directly at homes inhabited by civilians.

On Thursday, the 30th of July 2015, Huda Abdullah Al Rumaimah (18 years old) was in her house. At around 11:00 AM, she sustained a gunshot wound in her stomach because of direct shooting from the Popular Resistance that targeted Al Rumaimah house in the area. After several

(110) Interview by Mwatana with Ismael Abdullah Othman, 3 August 2015.

(111) Interview by Mwatana with one of the relatives of Amirah Saleh Ghaleb, 27 July 2015.

(112) Interview by Mwatana with Yusuf Muhammad Ahmad Muthana’s mother, 12 August 2015.

(113) Interview by Mwatana with Bashar Ali Saeed, 10 August 2015.

attempts to transport Huda to the hospital, she was taken, on Sunday, the 2nd of August 2015, to the Military Hospital but she died before reaching the hospital. She died that afternoon, at 12:00. Her body was put in the hospital morgue, and she was later buried in the Martyr's cemetery in Al Hawban.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

On Thursday, the 13th of August 2015, Shaima Abdoh Al Rumaimah (15 years old) was killed at around 2:00 PM, when she was trying to run away from her house to her uncle's Abdulbari Abdullah Al Rumaimah house, which was near her house. She was shot in the head and died. Her body was buried in Al-Kabeer mosque in Hadnan because her family was unable to bury her in a cemetery.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

On that same day, Jaleelah Muhammad Al Rumaimah (88 years old), and her son, Wadhah Abduljaleel Al Rumaimah (31 years old), were killed while they were in their home. They were killed after their house was fired at from a nearby house that had been taken over by the Popular Resistance. No one found out that they were dead until the next day, Friday, the 14th of August 2015.

One of Jaleelah Muhammad Al Rumaimah's relatives says: "I found my aunt, Jaleelah, in front of the bathroom door in the house, and her son was behind the bedroom door. He had a piece of cloth in his hands."⁽¹¹⁶⁾

On Friday, the 14th of August 2015, Izzaldeen Abdulqawi Al Rumaimah (18 years old) was injured by gunshot at around 4:00 PM, when he was on his way to his grandmother, Jaleelah Muhammad Al Rumaimah, to find out what had happened to her and her son. He sustained a gunshot wound to his side, and was taken to the Military Hospital. He died on Saturday, the 15th of August 2015, and was buried in the Hadnan Cemetery.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On Monday, the 31st of August 2015, Ismat Abdulmajeed Saleh Thabet (22 years old) was injured in the Al Jahmaliah neighborhood, southeast Taiz, while he was working on his motorcycle. He sustained a gunshot wound that entered from his upper back, penetrated his body, and exited from his chest. This area was the scene of fierce fighting between the Popular Resistance and Ansar Allah (Houthis), which caused many of its residents to evacuate.

Zahrah Muhammad Othman (60 years old), the mother of Ismat, says: "On Monday, the 31st of August 2015, at 4:00 PM, Ismat was still outside working on his motorcycle, and someone came to tell my oldest son that Ismat was injured. I visited him in Al-Rawdhah Hospital, where he had undergone a surgery, and he remained in the hospital for two weeks. Since that time, he is still in pain. The area that Ismat was injured in is an area of constant clashes."⁽¹¹⁸⁾

On Wednesday, the 23rd of September 2015, Shaima Abdoh Abdullah Hasan (17 years old) was injured by a bullet while she was in her home in Al Noor City, Al Mudhaffar district.

(114) Interviews by Mwatana with the relatives of Huda Abdullah Al Rumaimah, 2 September 2015 and 9 August 2016

(115) See previous footnote.

(116) Interview by Mwatana with one of the relatives of Jaleelah Muhammad Al Rumaimah, 2 September 2015.

(117) Interviews by Mwatana with the relatives of Izzaldeen Abdulqawi Al Rumaimah, 2 September 2015 and 9 August 2016

(118) Interview by Mwatana with Zahrah Muhammad Othman, 29 February 2016.

Shaima says: “At around 11:00 AM, while I was going up to the roof of the house, which is near the Air Defense Base, a base that the Houthis and Saleh’s forces control, I was hit by a bullet in the back of my left shoulder. I was taken, on that same day, to Al-Riyadh Hospital in Bir Basha. Due to the lack of supplies in that hospital, I was taken to Al-Thawrah Public Hospital. Now, I still need treatment and medical tests.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾

On Wednesday, the 2nd of December 2015, at 6:00 AM, gunfire led to the death of Adeeb Hamood Mahdi Abdullah (26 years old), who was a water truck driver, while he was coming from the area of Sabir.

Hamood Mahdi Abdullah (60 years old), Adeeb’s father, says: “At 6:00 AM, my son was hit by a bullet in his head while he was driving the water truck between the area of Tha’bat and Al Damghah, in a very narrow area. He fell with the truck into the yard of one of the houses in the area. When he was hit by the bullet, he was on the phone with another driver, and suddenly the phone call was cut off. Members of the Popular Resistance and other water truck drivers pulled Adeeb out and drove him to Al-Thawrah Hospital.”⁽¹²⁰⁾

Mujeeb Hamood Mahdi (17 years old), Adeeb’s brother, says: “At around 7:00 AM, water truck drivers came to our neighborhood and asked me to go to the Al Thawrah Hospital. I found out from them that my brother had sustained a head injury from gunfire, and that he had been on his way back from the water well. I found my brother with blood all over his face, and he was transferred from Al Thawrah Hospital to AlRawdhah Hospital, but he had already died.”⁽¹²¹⁾

On Friday, the 25th of December 2015, Noor Jamal Al Khadher Abdullah (27 years old) was shot in the stomach by gunfire, and the bullet ruptured her intestines. She was near her house in Sha’b Al Duba’a neighborhood in Al-Salh district.

Noor says: “At 9:00 AM, I went out to the neighbor’s house to put the solar panel on their roof. When I was coming back, I was shot by gunfire from the opposite side of my house. I was hit in the stomach, and I fell from the top of the stairs near the door to my house. My father was running towards me, and bullets were falling near him, at least 8 bullets were fired near us. He pulled me to the alley near the house and was able to take me to Al Rawdhah Hospital. I remained in the hospital from the morning until sunset (around seven hours), until my family was able to provide oxygen. There were no oxygen canisters in the hospital at that time.”⁽¹²²⁾

According to witnesses, the Hasm Brigades that is part of the Popular Resistance, were in control of that area, and the opposite area was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).⁽¹²³⁾

On Saturday, the 16th of January 2016, at 3:00 PM, Hanadi Aref Saif Muhammad (9 years old) and Ahmad Aref Saif Muhammad (6 years old) were injured by gunfire in Al-Dahi neighborhood in Al Mudhaffar district.

(119) Interview by Mwatana with Shaima Abdoh Abdullah Hasan, 19 April 2016.

(120) Interview by Mwatana with Hamood Mahdi Abdullah, 24 February 2016.

(121) Interview by Mwatana with Mujeeb Hamood Mahdi, 24 February 2016.

(122) Interview by Mwatana with Noor Jamal Al Khadir Abdullah, 27 April 2016.

(123) See previous footnote.

Their father, Aref Said Muhammad (32 years old), says: “On that day, there was a lot of gunfire between the Popular Resistance and the Houthis, and it had been going on since 10 in the morning. Hanadi and Muhammad went out to the Mudhish grocery store, which is in the same neighborhood. Moments after that, people from the neighborhood told me that Hanadi and Muhammad had been injured while returning from the grocery store. I quickly went out and found Hanadi walking around with blood all over her clothes. I carried Ahmad because he was not able to walk, and I took them to Al-Rawdhah Hospital. They got first aid treatment there, and then Ahmad was transferred to Al-Thawrah Hospital for surgery. Hanadi was injured by shrapnel in her right foot, while Ahmad was injured by a bullet in his right thigh. I do not know who was responsible for injuring my children. Few people have remained in the neighborhood, and most people have left out of fear for their lives.”⁽¹²⁴⁾

On Friday, the 5th of February 2016, at around 5:00 PM, Fatimah Muhammad Farea (45 years old) was killed by gunfire in Al Zahra’a neighborhood in Al Qahirah district.

This is an area of clashes between the Popular Resistance and Ansar Allah (Houthis). The Popular Resistance were in control of Al Zahra’a neighborhood, and Ansar Allah (Houthis) were in control of the nearby Al-Sayilah area.

Jalal Abdoh Hasan Hussein (17 years old), the son of the victim, says: “My mother went with my father in the afternoon of that day to buy a gas canister that she intended to resell in the sieged area to buy flour with the money she will make. At 5:00 PM, before sunset, she was shot in the head while she was carrying the gas canister on her head. She fell to the ground with the gas canister. My father was watching her, but he was unable to go to her and pull her away because he was afraid of being shot as well. She was hit a second and third time in her legs, and she kept bleeding until she died in the same spot where she fell, while my father watched. She stayed there until 7:00 PM, where members of the Popular Resistance were able to pull her out and take her to Al-Thawrah Hospital. My father came home and told us that our mother had died. She has four sons and four daughters, and she has a baby who is still breastfeeding. My mother was the breadwinner of the family.”⁽¹²⁵⁾

Mwatana got a two-minute long video that shows the victim, Fatimah, on the ground, and a cooking gas canister near her. In the video, gunfire can be heard and falling gunshots around the body of the victim, which shows deliberate fire targeting the victim.

On Saturday, the 13th of February 2016, at around 11:30 AM, clashes that started at the entrance to Al Dahi neighborhood killed Hamza Ameen Hizam (17 years old). This was after a delegation from the World Food Program entered the city of Taiz, from the Al Dahi entrance, which was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).

Ayedh Saeed Muhammad Saeed (33 years old), one of Hamza’s relatives, says: “Hamza was transporting men and women who were present at the entrance to bring food in, which take place once a week every Saturday. Minutes after the delegation came in through Al Dahi area, clashes started causing fear and panic among the people. Hamza was, at the time, transporting four women from the Popular Resistance checkpoint, trying to get them to the Houthi checkpoint.

(124) Interview by Mwatana with Aref Saif Muhammad, 5 March 2016.

(125) Interview by Mwatana with Jalal Abdoh Hussein, 22 February 2016.

Hamza was hit in the head by a gunfire, and he was taken to Al-Rawdhah Hospital by two of his cousins. His cousins were truck drivers. He died at 11:00 AM on the 15th of February 2016, and was buried in Saynah Cemetery.”⁽¹²⁶⁾

Ameen Hizam Muhammad (50 years old), Hamza’s father, says: “There is a large number of armed men in the area, because it is an area of heavy clashes, and this area has been the scene of continuous clashes between the Popular Resistance and the Houthis.”⁽¹²⁷⁾

At Al Dahi entrance as well, Ali Muhammad Ismael Al Harazi (16 years old) was killed on the 27th of February 2016. He was working transporting passengers on his motorcycle from the entrance to the center of the city.

Muhammad Ismael Al Harazi (50 years old), Ali’s father, says crying in pain for the loss of his son: “At 2:00 PM, I was at home, near the place of the incident, and Ali’s friends who were next to him when he was injured came to me and told me that Ali had been hit by gunfire, and that he was still in the same spot because no one could take him to the hospital. I went out, running, and I saw him on the ground. He had been shot in the head. I was praying that he was still alive but when we took him to Al-Rawdhah Hospital they told me that he had already died. No one next to him was hurt during that incident. I always felt that something bad would happen to him because he was a motorcycle driver in a dangerous area like Al-Dahi entrance.”⁽¹²⁸⁾

On Monday, the 14th of March 2016, two civilians were injured by gunfire while they were riding a bus in Hanash Valley, area of Al Rabee’i, Atta’iziyah district, to the west of the city of Taiz. The area of Al Rabee’i is considered a frontline in the battles between the two conflicted sides.

Rafeeq Abdoh Al Shaibani (35 years old), who was injured during the incident, says: “I was coming from the city of Al Turbah in order to travel to Sana’a and get medical treatment for my daughter. I was on a bus that I had been riding from Al Turbah. When we arrived to 30 Street, we heard gunfire. At around 11:20 AM, while we were on our way to Mafraq Al Dhikrah on 60 Street, a large caliber bullet went through the right side of the body of the bus and exited from the left side. This bullet went through my right leg left, injured my left leg, and it also injured the passenger that was sitting next to me. My right leg was almost amputated, and my nephew, who was with me on the bus, took me to Al-Karamah Hospital on another bus. I was given first aid, then taken to Al-Thawrah Hospital, where they amputated my right leg. I am now permanently disabled.”⁽¹²⁹⁾

(126) Interview by Mwatana with Ayedh Saeed Muhammad Saeed, 15 February 2016.

(127) Interview by Mwatana with Ameen Hizam Muhammad, 15 February 2016.

(128) Interview by Mwatana with Muhammad Ismael Al Harazi, 29 February 2016.

(129) Interview by Mwatana with Rafeeq Abdoh Al Shaibani, 13 April 2016.

Chapter Two:

Summary Executions

■ Legal Framework:

The International humanitarian law generally aims to regulate the practices of the different warring parties and mainly to ensure the safety of civilians. However, in addition to that, the IHL provides protection to certain warring groups to ensure mitigation of human suffering. For example, the IHL as well as the Customary Humanitarian law prohibit deliberate killing and torture, any other cruel and inhuman treatments; and forced disappearance of civilians or captured and injured soldiers who no longer are able to fight.

The Popular Resistance carried out extrajudicial executions against opponents who are believed to sympathize, work for, or affiliated with Ansar Allah (Houthis) or forces loyal to Saleh.

The incidents of executions were committed in varying times through 2015 and 2016 when the Popular Resistance was able to take control of a number of areas that had been under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis), such as the district of Mashra'a Wa Hadnan. Further, a number of executions were also carried out in the middle of the city of Taiz, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance.

Extrajudicial executions of civilians and of fighter of Ansar Allah (Houthis) were executed. After the Popular Resistance were able to capture and disarm the fighters, they then executed them and mutilated their bodies. Sometimes the bodies were dragged around on the streets showing vindictive nature in some cases.

■ The Incidents:

Mwatana documented 9 incidents of summary executions carried out by the Popular Resistance during the period from August 2015 to March 2016.

The Execution of Abdelfattah Al Dhammari (48 years old) on August 13, 2015:

On Thursday, the 13th of August 2015, the Popular Resistance executed Abdelfattah Al Dhammari (48 years old). On that day, the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President

Hadi carried out an attack on Almroor area in Al-Mudaffar district where the Political Security Organization headquarters is located.

An eyewitness says: “After violent clashes, the Popular Resistance was able to take control of the area on Thursday, the 13th of August 2015, at around 10:00 AM. The Popular Resistance captured Abdelfattah Al Dhammari at that time when Al Dhammari was trying to escape after he left his weapon. He left the yard of the Political Security Organization towards Sayilah Saynah. He was immediately shot and killed, and his body was thrown in Sayilah Deluxe, which is behind the livestock market in the middle of the city of Taiz. His body was taken the next day by a car belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross. On that same day, I saw the execution of another person in the middle of the street. I do not know his name, but it was said that he was a sniper that was caught in Jahmaliah neighborhood. After he was executed, his body was dragged around by motorcycles, and then it was hung up on the Nasser School and 26th of September Street intersection in the city of Taiz.”⁽¹³⁰⁾

The Execution of Afeef Abdullah Al Rumaimah (45 years old), August 16, 2015:

At the end of July 2015, armed clashes occurred between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Popular Resistance forces in the district of Mashra’a Wa Hadnan in Mount Sabir. On the 15th of August 2015, Ansar Allah (Houthis) retreated from the district, and the Popular Resistance took control. The Popular Resistance after that executed at least two members of Al Rumaimah family, in addition to looting and burning a number of the family’s houses according to the interviews that were conducted by Mwatana. These executions were carried out under the justification of being affiliated with Ansar Allah (Houthis). The summary executions were committed when the victims were not participating in any fighting or posing any real danger to the Popular Resistance.

Lubna Sadiq Abdullah Al Rumaimah (25 years old female), who saw the execution of Afeef Abdullah Al Rumaimah (45 years old), a college professor that used to work in Sana’a University, says: “He was taken from the house on Sunday, the 16th of August 2015 between 8:00 and 9:00 am by armed men from the Popular Resistance after they took control of our village. They took him to be a part of the negotiations that the Popular Resistance had called for. Uncle Afeef went out, and he said that he would be a mediator between Al Rumaimah family and the Resistance. When he went out, members of the Resistance handcuffed him. He was telling them that there is not a single weapon in his house, and that he had never carried a weapon in his life. He said that he was a college professor in Sana’a University, and that he wanted to reach an agreement and truce with them, but they shot and killed him.”⁽¹³¹⁾

The relatives of the victim stated that the Popular Resistance took his body and threw it from the highest building in Hayel Saeed High School complex, and claimed that he had committed suicide. Afeef’s body remained thrown in the open air until noon that day until at around 1:00PM; the women of Al Rumaimah family took the body and buried it in the Hadnan Cemetery.⁽¹³²⁾

(130) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 28 April 2016.

(131) Interview by Mwatana with Lubna Sadiq Abdullah Al Rumaimah, 2 September 2015.

(132) Interview by Mwatana with the relatives of Afeef Abdullah Al Rumaimah, 2 September 2015.

The Execution of Muhammad Abdulqawi Abdullah Al Rumaimah (42 years old), Abbas Abdullah Al Rumaimah (46 years old), and Abdullah Abdulrahman Al Rumaimah (60 years old) on August 16, 2015:

Arafat Al Rumaimah (44 years old) says: “On the same day that Afeef Al Rumaimah was executed, Muhammad Abdulqawi Al Rumaimah was taken from his home at around 10:00 AM by a group of armed men from the Popular Resistance. They said that they wanted to interrogate him. He was killed in the middle of the road while handcuffed on their way to the Hayel Saeed High School complex in the area of Al Rajhah. This was around 11:00 AM.”⁽¹³³⁾

According to an interview with Al Rumaimah, Muhammad Abdulqawi Al Rumaimah was buried that same day, Sunday, the 16th of August 2015, in the Hadnan Cemetery.⁽¹³⁴⁾

Al Rumaimah also mentioned that Abbas Abdullah Al Rumaimah (46 years old) was executed while handcuffed in the area of Al Jabanah, after he was taken out from his home on Sunday, the 16th of August 2015. Abdullah Abdulrahman Al Rumaimah (60 years old) was also executed when he went to inquire about the detainees from Al Rumaimah family who had been detained by the Popular Resistance. The Popular Resistance has not until the time of the interview returned the two men’s bodies back to their family.⁽¹³⁵⁾

The Execution of a Woman, November 10, 2015:

On Monday, the 10th of November 2015, an armed group belonging to the Popular Resistance executed a woman in Al-Jeenat Cemetery in Al Mudhaffar district.

An eyewitness says: “At 11:00 AM, around three people entered the cemetery from the main entrance. They were carrying machine guns and accompanying a woman in her late forties. The three armed men shot her from behind, and she died instantly. People started gathering to find out what was happening, and one of the armed men starting shooting into the air to disperse the people. The armed men ordered the people to not interfere because the woman, according to the armed men, was helping the Houthis in the area of Tha’bat. She helped the Houthis kill innocent civilians, they claimed, by giving the Houthis water and food, and smuggling ammunition to them. After the three armed men left the cemetery, one of them returned to the body of the woman and shot her again in her head. Then the armed men went to the cemetery guard and ordered him to bury her in the mass grave of the Houthis.”⁽¹³⁶⁾ It was a very scary and horrifying scene.”⁽¹³⁷⁾

(133) Interview by Mwatana with Arafat Al Rumaimah, 9 August 2016.

(134) See previous footnote.

(135) See previous footnote.

(136) According to the interviews with eyewitnesses, inside the Al Ajeenat Cemetery, there is a mass grave where the Houthi dead are buried.

(137) Interview by Mwatana with eyewitnesses, 18 April 2016.

The Execution of Fahd Al Awdi (34 years old), December 20, 2015:

On Sunday, the 20th of December 2015, at around 7:40 PM, a group of people from the Popular Resistance arrived at the home of one of Fahd Al Awdi (34 years old) friends. Al Awdi was a businessman and he lived in the neighborhood of the Eastern Court, in Al Qahirah district, which is under the control of the Popular Resistance.

According to eye witnesses, Al Awdi was called out of his friend's house by the armed men from the Popular Resistance. He was in his friend's house chewing Qat. One of the armed men talked to him and a verbal argument started between them. The armed men were staying next to the car that they came in. Al Awdi was pulled away from the door of his friend's house and was taken to not far away spot on the same street. The car's headlights were turned off, and Al Awdi was shot directly. His body was left in the same spot, and the armed men left the area. The people of the neighborhood talked to the neighborhood akel and told him what had happened, and they buried the body.⁽¹³⁸⁾

The Execution of Marwan Abdulkafi Al Junaid (18 years old), February 9, 2016:

On the morning of Tuesday, the 9th of February 2016, a group of armed men from the Popular Resistance kidnapped Marwan Abdulkafi Al Junaid from Al Damnah Market. They beat and tortured him, then killed him that same day by gunfire in the 35th Armored Brigade Base, which was newly established in the beginning of the war in Al Nashmah area in the Al Ma'afer district.

One of Al Junaid's relatives says: "Marwan lives in the area of Jabab Al Mahatah in Al Misrakh district. On Tuesday, the 9th of February 2016, at around 11:00 AM, he went to buy Qat and some things from Al Damnah Market. While he was in the market, a group of armed men came on a Popular Resistance vehicle that was painted black. They started beating Marwan, claiming that he was a Houthi, and that some of his family were Houthis. They then took him on the vehicle to the base of the 35th Armored Brigade in Al Nashmah area (the 13th of July School). I contacted one of the leaders of the Popular Resistance, and he told me that Marwan was alright. I was shocked to later find out over the phone that Marwan had been executed noon the same day that he was kidnapped, and that his body was being kept in the morgue of Khalifah General Hospital in Al Turbah. I was not able to go to Al Turbah until 40 days after the incident. When I saw the body, there were bruises around his neck, and bullets wounds on the left side of his body that went all the way through to his right side, and in his thighs. There were also bullet wounds on the left side of his chest that exited from his back, while his right arm had been smashed from the shoulder. His body was buried on the day it was received from the Khalifah General Hospital in Dhu Rayhanah Cemetery in Al Misrakh district on the 20th of March 2016."⁽¹³⁹⁾

The death certificate of Marwan Abdulkafi Al Junaid, which was issued from the Khalifah General Hospital, proves that he had arrived dead on the same day that he was kidnapped by armed men from the Popular Resistance.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

(138) Interview by Mwatana with eyewitnesses, 28 April 2016.

(139) Interview by Mwatana with one of the relatives of Marwan Abdulkafi Al Junaid, 2 May 2016.

(140) Mwatana got a copy of the Marwan Abdulkafi Al Junaid's death certificate, and it shows that his body reached the hospital on 9 February 2016.

The Execution of Ahmad Ali Abduljalil (33 years old), March 11, 2016:

On Friday, the 11th of March 2016, armed members of the Hasm Brigades, a part of the Popular Resistance, executed Ahmad Ali Abduljalil (33 years old) and dragged his body through the streets. This happened after the Hasm Brigade took control of Al Dahi area in Al Mudhaffar district, which was, previously, under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh's forces.

An eyewitness says: "Ahmad Ali Abduljalil, who was nicknamed Wahshi, was one of the people that were always in Al Dahi entrance, and he used to search the people crossing the checkpoint. He would not allow the entry of food or medical supplies, and he would inform on any Dawa'ish (literally 'members of ISIS'), as they were called by the Houthis and Saleh's forces. During the afternoon of Friday, the 11th of March 2016, at 4:00 PM, Wahshi was chewing Qat on the sidewalk near the entrance of Bir Basha Market. When armed men from the Hasm Brigade, which is a part of the Popular Resistance, arrived in that area, they recognized him as a wanted man. He was arrested and killed right away by being shot at least 10 times. His body was then tied to the back of a motorcycle, and two men whose faces were covered were on the motorcycle. Their weapons had the slogans of the Hasm Brigades. His body was then dragged for around 2 kilometers, from the area of Bir Basha to Al Sayilah (a ditch), which is in Al Thawrah School neighborhood in the middle of the city. People in the area watched the body being dragged around, and they were in extreme horror and fear. The body was then thrown into the ditch, which was full of garbage."⁽¹⁴¹⁾

Mwatana saw the body of Ahmad Ali Abduljalil after it was dragged and thrown into Al Sayilah (a ditch), within the parameters of Al Thawrah School neighborhood. This was when Mwatana visited the area on Saturday, the 12th of March 2016.

(141) Interview by Mwatana with eyewitnesses, 26 April 2016.

Chapter Three:

Imposing Blockades, Looting Aid Supplies, and Attacking Relief Organizations, Hospitals, and Medical Crews

■ Legal Framework:

International humanitarian law requires parties to a conflict to allow and facilitate passage and access of humanitarian relief supplies and aid to civilians. It also prohibits collective punishment and starvation of civilians, considering such actions war crimes.

Based on the research of Mwatana, Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh have at certain times impeded and hindered passage of humanitarian relief supplies and food to civilians in different parts of the city of Taiz over a long period of several months under the pretext of stopping supplies to the Popular Resistance.

Despite the fact that the limitations and blockade in a number of different entry points into Taiz were not continuous, but they continued for several months on a wide scope affecting the delivery of humanitarian aid, food, medicine, and medical supplies to tens of thousands of civilians who were stuck in the middle of the fighting. The acute shortage in medicine and medical supplies, as well as the shortage of food, basic supplies, and water, continued for several weeks in the whole city. The blockade and limitation also caused a sharp increase in the price of food, and it made some food supplies, like flour and rice, too expensive for most of the population, especially those that were unable to get free aid supplies when humanitarian organizations were able to reach their areas.

Mwatana noticed, from the testimony of the people in a number of cases, that Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh have failed to differentiate between civilians and fighters in the areas that were under the control of the Popular Resistance, and they kept claiming that all of the people in these areas were members of ISIS. In addition to that, Ansar Allah and Saleh's forces considered, in many cases, civilians that live in areas under the control of the Popular Resistance as supporters of the Popular Resistance. Despite the overwhelming popular anger in Taiz at the restrictions imposed on entry into the city and the blockade, and its effect on civilian residents of the city, Ansar Allah and Saleh's forces continued

to enforce strict limitations during different periods. These restrictions affected the entry of food and medicine into the city, and this was a collective punishment that affected all of the people that were in neighborhoods not under the control of Ansar Allah and Saleh's forces.

The Popular Resistance also carried out attacks on relief organizations and looted warehouses where humanitarian aid was stored.

■ ■ Section One: Imposing Blockades and Denying or Restricting Entry of Aid, Food, Consumer Goods, and Medical Supplies

Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh enforced a blockade and restricted the entry of relief aid, food, consumer goods, medical supplies, and medicine into the city of Taiz, from the beginning of August 2015 until March 2016, particularly after the Popular Resistance took control of the center of the city. At that time, there were no specified periods for executing the restrictions procedures; they were random.

For a number of weeks, Ansar Allah and Saleh's forces hindered international and local humanitarian organizations from delivering relief aid, including basic goods and basic life-saving medical supplies to the densely populated city, increasing the suffering of hundreds of thousands as a result of acute shortage of water, food, electricity, gas, and fuel.⁽¹⁴²⁾

Apparently, the blockade aimed to tighten the noose around the Popular Resistance, which was stationed in the center of the city by cutting off supplies. The security guards at checkpoints and entrances to the city claimed that measures of that nature were taken to stop the supplies from reaching ISIS members referring to fighters of the Popular Resistance as described by them- and this is what was said in a number of interviews that were carried out by Mwatana. People from the city were forced to relocate to other governorates because of the bad conditions caused by the blockade and siege on food entry and its scarcity in the city's market, in addition to the sharp increase in their prices.

The blockade and siege on entry of relief aid and basic needs was practiced in varying levels and patterns at different points in time. In the beginning of July 2015, the blockade was enforced for a few hours only. From August until October 2015, bulky shipments of supplies on large trucks were completely banned from entry particularly shipments from the area of Al Hawban to the east of the city and Bir Basha to the west. At the end of October 2015 and the beginning of November 2015, all motor vehicles were completely banned from entering from the Republican Palace direction in Al Salh district. The only entry left was through Bir Basha area (Al Dahi

(142) Doctors Without Borders: Yemen: Medical aid blocked from entering besieged area in Taiz - <http://www.msf-me.org/en/news/news-media/news-press-releases/yemen-medical-aid-blocked-from-entering-besieged-area-in-taiz-msf.html> (visited on 2 November 2016)

Yemen: ICRC deeply concerned by the impact of fighting in Taiz, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/yemen-fightings-taiz-civilians> (visited on 2 November 2016)

passage point) elevating the blockade to its highest peak.

Al Dahi passage was under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and it was the worst passage point in enforcing the blockade and restrictions on aid, food, and consumer goods. It was known for its humiliating treatment of people passing through. Leaving the city of Taiz was easy for whoever wanted to leave, and people were allowed to enter, but were not allowed to bring in any food or consumer goods. From time to time women were allowed to enter the city carrying food and consumer goods.

People going through the passing had to walk, on foot, for around 400 meters from the security checkpoint that is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis) (the entry from Issa Valley with Habel Salman), towards the security checkpoint that was under the control of the Popular Resistance (Al Khaw'ah Hill). In December 2015, Ansar Allah (Houthis) forced vehicles and cars to stop at the intersection of the Saqr Sports and Cultural Center, around 300 meters from the checkpoint that the group controls, adding more distance that people had to walk into the city. They had to walk a distance of around 700 meters after waiting for days.

This led to the increase in prices because of the increased cost of goods' transportation into Taiz. Prices of food, consumer goods, and medicine spiked up, adding an additional burden on the residents of the city.

During the period from December 2015 to March 2016, no clear schedule was put in place for opening and closing the passage point during the days when the passage would be opened. The passage would be open for few hours on Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays, from the early morning hours until before noon, then it would be opened again a little after that to the afternoon, after which it would be closed for the day.

The residents of the city of Taiz, during the period of the blockade, depended on the goods that were in storages in the city. However due to the little amount of stored goods, prices would gradually rise because food and consumer goods were being brought in through the Talooq Mountain road, which is also known as the path of donkeys or the path of death because of the accidents that would happen on it. People crossing through this path would have to walk on foot or use donkeys or four-wheel vehicles because of how rough the path was to cross. The distance from Mafraq Talooq (which is between the areas of Al Dhabab and Najd Qaseem) to Mashra'a village, which is in the Mashra'a Wa Hadnan district, is estimated to be around 2 kilometers. People crossing this path take around two to three hours to make it through because of the difficulty. After that, they travel in cars from Mashra'a to reach the city on the paved road, a trip that takes around an hour.

Some people would smuggle food, consumer goods, and medicine, in small quantities, through the passage point that were under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis), and the group would force them to pay high 'fees' to allow some of the products in.

After the Popular Resistance took control of Al Dahi passage in March 2016, the security situation there did not calm down, and the area was still the scene of continuous clashes. The residents resorted to, in addition to using the Talooq Path, using the Ghorab Valley dirt path to reach the city. At the end of July 2016, Ansar Allah (Houthis) completely blocked the Ghorab Valley path, and this left the residents with only one choice: to use the mountainous and rough Talooq Path.

This section sheds light on several testimonies that were documented by Mwatana at different

times during the period from July 2015 to March 2016, on the banning of the entry of food, medical supplies, and aid by Ansar Allah (Houthis) at the passages and entry points of the city of Taiz.

■ The Incidents:

Wael Hasan Al Wajeih (27 years old), who is a nurse, says: “On Tuesday, the 28th of July 2015, at 12:00 PM, I was able to get medicine for patients suffered from liver failure. When I passed through Al Qasr Intersection, I was detained, along with the medicine, and accused of taking the medicine to the ‘members of ISIS’, and they threatened to kill me. I begged them, and swore to Allah that the medicine was for patients with liver failure. After three hours of fear and tension, and guns pointed at me, they finally allowed me to pass.”⁽¹⁴³⁾

On Friday, the 7th of August 2015, three trucks loaded with relief aid going to Al Mawasit district were detained. These trucks were funded by the World Food Program. The trucks were detained by the security checkpoint in the area of Al Rabee’i that was manned by members of Ansar Allah. They also detained the drivers and threatened to confiscate the goods in their trucks. Efforts to gain the release of the trucks failed despite communication with officials from Ansar Allah. In the night of Sunday, the 9th of August 2015, the drivers were forced to drive the trucks, with their cargo, to Mafraq Shar’ab, where it was all confiscated.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

On Monday, the 10th of August 2015, five additional trucks were detained, and they were carrying humanitarian and relief aid for the Al Mawasit district. They were also funded by the World Food Program. They were detained by the same security checkpoint in the area of Al Rabee’i and manned by Ansar Allah, and the drivers were also forced to drive the trucks to Mafraq Shar’ab, where the cargo was confiscated.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

During August 2015, Ansar Allah (Houthis) did not allow any food or consumer goods to go into the city of Taiz from the security checkpoint of Habeel Salman near Taiz University.

An eyewitness says: “When a truck with consumer goods arrived to the area near Taiz University in Habeel Salman, at around 5:00 PM, it was not allowed to enter the city. One of the people manning the checkpoint said: ‘Nothing is allowed in...even empty packages are not allowed in for the Dawa’ish.’ He was adamant about not letting the truck enter the city.”⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

Another eyewitness adds: “On Sunday, the 6th of September 2015, I was on a bus when we reached Al Qasr Intersection while entering Taiz. I was next to a vegetable seller that had bags full of vegetables that he wanted to take into Taiz to sell. The bus was stopped at the first Houthi checkpoint, and they searched the bus. They asked the vegetable seller about where he was going to, and he told them that he was going to the Central Market in the middle of the city. The armed

(143) Interview by Mwatana with Wael Hasan Al Wajeih, 20 April 2016.

(144) Interview by Mwatana with a local humanitarian aid worker, 17 August 2015.

(145) See previous footnote.

(146) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 7 October 2015.

Houthis told him: ‘Get off the bus with your goods...it is prohibited for anything to be taken to ISIS members.’”(147)

On Saturday, the 10th of October 2015, armed men from Ansar Allah (Houthis) were stopping food from entering the city through their checkpoints in Al Ba’arah. The group controls the area, which is to the northwest of Taiz.

Abdullah Muhammad Hasan (34 years old), one of the relatives of Abdulaziz Abdulghani Nasr (22 years old), who wanted to go into the city of Taiz with his car, which was loaded with canisters of cooking gas says: “Abdulaziz was detained by the Houthis for two days in Al Ba’arah because he wanted to go into the city with a truck loaded with 150 canisters of cooking gas. The Houthis made him pay 300,000 YER (around 1,200 USD) for allowing him to go into the city with the gas canisters. He had to pay this unfair fee that they demanded. After he paid them, they told him to take a specific road, because they claimed that this road was safe. Five minutes after he drove away, they shot him and the driver. Abdulaziz was injured, and the cooking gas was not allowed to reach the city. Abdulaziz told me that, while he was detained, there was a civilian that had 10 livestock animals. The armed men in the security checkpoint asked for 150,000 YER (around 600 USD) for allowing him to bring in the livestock. He refused and left the livestock for them. He continued on his way to the city after leaving his cargo at the checkpoint. There were people that wanted to bring in bags of flour, but the Houthis would not allow them to do that. They would tear the bags and pour the flour on the ground in front of the people. They would confiscate food, vegetables, and water trucks, and they would not allow any of them into the city.”(148)

Talal Al Maqrani (30 years old), a vegetable seller in Al Masbah neighborhood in the middle of the city, says: “For the past month, I have been stopped from bringing vegetables into the city, and the Houthi forces, which are stationed by the entry point in Tha’bat area to the east of the city, confiscate any shipments.”(149)

Haroun Murshid (20 years old), who owns a store that sells food and consumer goods, adds: “On Wednesday, the 7th of October 2015, a water truck was stopped at a security checkpoint manned by the Houthis and the forces loyal to former President, Saleh, in the area of Bir Basha to the southwest of the city. The water was poured out onto the ground after one of the armed men climbed onto the truck and urinated into the water tank.”(150)

A team from Mwatana confirmed, during a visit to the city of Taiz in October 2015, that Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Saleh, were besieging the entry passages into the city, especially through the checkpoints in Tha’bat, Salh, Al Hawban, and Bir Basha. The team also saw stacks of food and consumer goods at the security checkpoints. Their owners were stopped from bringing in any food, medical supplies, and fuel into the city after being thoroughly searched at the checkpoint.(151)

Mwatana’s team also checked the conditions of the operational hospitals in the city. In addition

(147) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 6 September 2015.

(148) Interview by Mwatana with Abdullah Muhammad Hasan, 10 October 2015.

(149) Interview by Mwatana with Talal Al Maqrani, 10 October 2015.

(150) Interview by Mwatana with Haroun Murshid, 10 October 2015.

(151) Visit by Mwatana to Taiz during the period from 28 to 31 October 2015

to the deteriorating security situation, the blockade that was imposed on the city at the time by Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh greatly increased the deterioration of medical services in the hospitals.

Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital building was damaged by the fighting between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Popular Resistance and the constant clashes in the area where it is located. In addition to that, the hospital “is unable to perform its duties as well as it could because of the lack of energy, fuel (petroleum extracts), medicine, and water”. A hospital official told Mwatana’s team.⁽¹⁵²⁾

The official added: “There are around 12,500 liters of diesel stored in the storage tanks of the Yemeni Petroleum Company, which is under the control of Ansar Allah and Saleh’s forces. None of the diesel reached the hospital. We can get some medicine in very limited quantities, smuggled by individuals, but fuel is more important. Without fuel, we cannot do anything. The hospital is at risk of being completely closed if fuel is not available.”⁽¹⁵³⁾

He also said that, because the solutions used for kidney dialysis finished, the kidney dialysis center was temporarily closed for one day on the 7th of October 2015. The center was at risk of remaining closed if the solutions were not made available, while the fuel that was available would have only been enough for two more weeks. The hospital was unable to bring in emergency medicine and medicine and solutions for kidney dialysis because of the blockade imposed on the city, and the hospital was also unable to get aid from an international medical organization for that purpose. When Mwatana visited the hospital, they only had two oxygen canisters.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

Ahmad Al Dumaini, who is a doctor in Al Thawrah Hospital in Taiz, says: “Due to the blockade imposed on the city, the hospital does not receive the fuel, medicine, medical supplies, and oxygen canisters it requires. The equipment for running blood tests is also still being detained at the entrances of the city. After mediations, the platelet separation machine was allowed into the hospital yesterday (29 October 2015), after it was kept for almost a month. There is also a quantity of fuel that is still being kept in the Yemen Petroleum Company storage tanks, and they have not been given to the hospital in more than two months.”⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Al Dumaini added that there is an emergency need for 16 oxygen canisters for the kidney dialysis center in the hospital, and that these canisters were not allowed in by the security checkpoint in Tha’bat manned by representatives of Ansar Allah. The hospital also gets some medicine that is smuggled into the city, but they come at exorbitant prices. All of the departments, with the exception of the Dengue Fever Department, the Surgical Center, and the Kidney Dialysis Department, were closed because of the deteriorating conditions in the hospital. Since 28 October 2015, the hospital has been transferring birth cases to the Military Hospital (until the time of the interview).⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

Murtadha Al Huwaish, the General Manager of Al Safwah Hospital, says: “The Yemen

(152) Interview by Mwatana with one of the officials from the Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital, 31 October 2015.

(153) See previous footnote.

(154) See previous footnote.

(155) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Al Dumaini, 30 October 2015.

(156) See previous footnote.

Petroleum Company did not provide the hospital with any of the fuel allocated for it, despite the fact that the dues had been paid for more than a month and a half. This pushes the hospital to buy fuel from the black market on a daily basis, and the prices in the black market are high. The hospital was closed in the past, during the months of May and July 2015, because of the shortage in petroleum extracts. If the situation continues like this, then the hospital will begin to gradually close down.”⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

Al Huwaish added: “If we cannot get any oxygen, the ICU will have to close, as will the operating room. The hospital currently has in storage 12 oxygen canisters, and we use very little of it because the security checkpoints do not allow any oxygen to be brought into the city from the areas of Al Hawban and Bir Basha. The hospital suffers from a shortage of medical supplies for the operation rooms and medicine, and there is also a shortage of distilled water and lab solutions. All of this is due to the blockade that has choked the life out of hospitals.”⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

Suhail Al Dhabhani, the General Manager of Al Rawdhah Hospital, says: “The lack of petroleum extracts and the rising price of fuel on the black market, in addition to the lack of oxygen, are the biggest obstacles facing hospitals. On the night of Wednesday, the 23rd of September 2015, a shipment of oxygen canisters for the hospital was detained by a security checkpoint in Bir Basha manned by representatives of the Houthis. International organizations responsible for this were informed, and, until now (at the time of the interview), the shipment has yet to be released.”⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

Al Dhabhani also mentioned that the medicine and lab solutions were also finishing every day, and that, at that time, there was no more of them in the city of Taiz.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

On Saturday, the 2nd of January 2016, Ansar Allah (Houthis) were restricting the entry of food and consumer goods from the Al Dahi entry, which is controlled by them.

Abduljaleel Saif (35 years old), who owns a store that sells chickens, says: “We cannot bring large quantities of anything through the Al Dahi crossing, even chickens. Each individual is only allowed to bring in one chicken, and I had to use the Talooq path. At the beginning of that path, we use donkeys because the path is very mountainous and difficult to cross. After crossing this area, we use a car to enter Taiz.”⁽¹⁶¹⁾

In an interview with a businessman who works inside Taiz, he said that at the end of January 2016, just so he would be able to bring products in through the Al Dahi crossing, he would have to bring a number of young men from inside the city to help bring in the products because each person would only be allowed to bring in one bag of flour. Sometimes he would even have to cross into the city over mountainous paths on donkeys. All of this led to the cost of transporting the products to go up by 100%, and sometimes by 50%.⁽¹⁶²⁾

Ansar Allah (Houthis) continued the same practices during February 2016. An eyewitness

(157) Interview by Mwatana with Murtadha Al Huwaish, 31 October 2015.

(158) See previous footnote.

(159) Interview by Mwatana with Suhail Al Dhabhani, 31 October 2015.

(160) See previous footnote.

(161) Interview by Mwatana with Abduljalil Saif, 4 March 2016.

(162) Interview by Mwatana with a businessman that operates in the city of Taiz, 3 March 2016.

says: “When I used to go to Bir Basha to buy things, the Houthis would stop people and cut open the plastic bags that people carried. Rarely would they allow people to enter without being stopped. I only went there when it was absolutely necessary because of the degrading treatment. They would stop people and beat them. On the morning one day, at 11:00 AM, the Houthis suddenly decided to stop anyone from entering the city through that point. They tried to disperse the people trying to go into the city by shooting, throwing rocks, and beating them with rocks. A person was injured when a rock hit his back, and he was carrying a gas canister on his shoulder.”⁽¹⁶³⁾

Haytham Abdulbari Al Tayyib (26 years old), adds: “One day in February, at 8:00 in the morning, I went to buy some things from Bir Basha. When I returned to Al Dahi passage point, the Houthis detained me, and they did not allow me to pass. They kept telling me to go back to where I came from. I was carrying vegetables, chicken, rice, and sugar, and they took the vegetables and chicken and threw them on the ground and stepped on them. They took the bags of rice and sugar to their warehouses. When I saw this, I tried to force my way in, and I did not care if they killed me because of how angry and humiliated I felt, but they beat me with the buttstock of their guns.”⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Radfan Muhammad Al Shameeri (28 years old) says: “On Tuesday, the 8th of March 2016, I bought food from Bir Basha Market because there were no goods in the markets inside Taiz due to the blockade. When I returned at around 11:30 AM to Al Dahi passage to go back into the city with the food, the armed Houthi men and Saleh’s forces did not allow me to go in because they said that the people inside the city were ‘ISIS members’. When I tried to negotiate with the people manning the checkpoint, and tell them that these goods were to be used in my home, one of the armed men fired shots in the air to scare me, and he attacked me with a wood stick while cursing at me. I stayed at the security checkpoint for around 2 hours, and I tried to take the goods so that I could take them back to the store that I bought them from in Bir Basha Market, but the Houthis confiscated them, and they told me to go back where I came from.”⁽¹⁶⁵⁾

The goods that Al Shameeri wanted to bring into the city were food and consumer goods, including milk, rice, flour, sugar, cooking oil, spices, and laundry detergent.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

■ ■ Section Two: Attacking Relief Organizations and Looting Humanitarian Aid Warehouses

During the armed conflict in the city of Taiz, the Popular Resistance carried out attacks on relief organizations and looted warehouses that contained humanitarian relief supplies during separate occasions in 2015 and 2016. In this report, Mwatana will shed light on four incidents of attacks on relief organizations and looting of warehouses with humanitarian aid supplies.

(163) Interview by Mwatana with an eyewitness, 23 April 2016.

(164) Interview by Mwatana with Haytham Abdulbari Al Tayyib, 23 April 2016.

(165) Interview by Mwatana with Radfan Muhammad Al Shameeri, 22 August 2016.

(166) See previous footnote.

■ The Incidents:

Between April and May 2015, armed groups from the Abu Abbas Brigades affiliated with the Popular Resistance, stole a car in possession of a relief organization after midnight. In another incident, an armed group in the same area that the Abu Abbas Brigades control came and looted the equipment in the warehouses of the organization.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

On the night of the 23rd of August 2015, a building that is used by a relief organization in the area of Tha'bat was directly targeted by gunfire and shells. None of the workers were harmed, and they had to evacuate the building and the area. The possessions of the building and the warehouse were looted.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

When the Popular Resistance took control of a number of areas in March 2016, the warehouses used for storing humanitarian aid supplies were looted. On Saturday, the 12th of March 2016, at around 10:00 AM, three warehouses with humanitarian aid supplies in the area of Bir Basha, in Al Mudhaffar district, were looted by Abu Al Abbas Brigades, which are affiliated with the Popular Resistance.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

(167) Interview by Mwatana with a relief worker, 8 August 2016.

(168) Interview by Mwatana with a relief worker, 19 July 2016.

(169) Interview by Mwatana with a relief worker, 12 April 2016.

■ ■ Section Three: Attacks on Hospitals and Medical Service Centers and Crews

■ Legal Framework:

International humanitarian law requires the parties to the conflict to ensure that employees of humanitarian relief organizations (individuals and agencies) are protected from attack, harassment, smuggling, and arbitrary detention. The parties to the conflict must ensure that civilian humanitarian relief workers have the ability to move around freely in accordance with their duties.

International humanitarian law prohibits targeting civilians and civilian buildings. In this regard, hospitals and medical facilities have full protection by nature and function, and because they are usually administered by civilians. These types of buildings are expected to have a large number of civilians, especially during conflicts. The only exception to this rule is when these hospitals and medical facilities are targeted for being used for military purposes, like storing weapons, for example.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016) confirmed that deliberate attacks targeting hospitals and places where patients and injured people are gathered –on the condition that these are not military targets- as well as attacks deliberately targeting the carriers of the symbols specified in the Geneva Conventions, according to international law, including buildings, supplies, medical crews, means of transport, and individuals, are deemed war crimes according to international law.

The Resolution strongly urges states and all parties to armed conflicts to develop effective measures to prevent and address acts of violence, attacks and threats against medical and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities in armed conflict.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

International humanitarian law therefore specifically protects medical personnel, facilities and transports, precisely because they are indispensable in times of war. Not doing so risks multiplying the impact on health systems, which in turn risk unraveling with an impact far beyond the region concerned, a burden on future generations.

Attacking a hospital, threatening a doctor, coercing a nurse to give preferential treatment to armed fighters, hijacking ambulances, using patients as human shields – these are not examples of collateral damage. These are not sad realities that we have to get used to. They are abominations and trends that must be fought.

(170) Resolution 2286 (2015) by the United Nations Security Council in its 7685th Meeting, Held in May 2016.

The direct effects on health-care facilities, personnel and transports are grave, yet the indirect effects go even deeper.⁽¹⁷¹⁾

■ The Incidents:

Hospitals and medical centers and crews in the city of Taiz have been greatly harmed, and became within the range of the exchange bombing between the warring parties, in addition to the airstrikes carried out by the Saudi-led Arab Coalition. Some hospitals have also been subject to looting and raiding by parties to the armed ground conflict.

The city of Taiz and its suburbs include around 26 hospitals and private and public health facilities. Some of them have been directly damaged by the armed ground conflict, either by shelling or gunfire. Some have been closed, either partially or completely, due to either their location in areas that suffers from continuous clashes resulted from deteriorating security situation, or due to the unavailability of the required resources that these hospitals and centers need to continue providing medical services.. A number of these hospitals were on the frontlines of the clashes between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the one side and the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi on the other hand. This is the case with Al Jumhoori Hospital, Al Thawrah Hospital, Al Darn Hospital, and Al Hamd Hospital. The armed conflict in the city of Taiz has also stopped hospitals from working at their full capacity because hospital employees and doctors cannot get to the hospitals, in addition to the lack of fuel during the first several months of the war.

The people of the city were afraid to take the injured and sick to the hospitals, especially to government hospitals, like Al Thawrah Hospital and Al Jumhoori Hospital, except in extreme circumstances because the two hospitals were constantly targets of shelling, which puts the lives of the employees and doctors of these hospitals, as well as the patients that are getting medical treatment and their families, in danger.

Medical services in the city of Taiz have suffered from sharp deterioration during the blockade that was imposed on the city by Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Hospitals were unable to get the medical supplies, medicine, fuel, and oxygen that they needed, and these supplies are necessary for these hospitals to operate.⁽¹⁷²⁾

Furthermore, hospitals in the city of Taiz receive large number of bodies of people who got killed due to the conflict but hospitals face a problem with preserving the bodies. In the Al Rawdhah Hospital, for example, one of the employees said that the hospital staff had to resort to using ice cream freezers to preserve the bodies of the dead because the morgue in the hospital was full. Similar problem was faced by Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital, where an employee said that the hospital's morgue was full of bodies, and there is no electricity to keep the bodies

(171) Statement given by Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC, at the United Nations Security Council Briefing, 3 May 2016, New York, USA, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/hcid-statement>, (visited on 15 October 2016).

(172) Review chapter Three (Imposing Blockades, Looting Aid Supplies, and Attacking Relief Organizations, Hospitals, and Medical Crews).

cold.⁽¹⁷³⁾

In addition to that, the hospitals in the city of Taiz are usually at risk of being raided by armed men from the Popular Resistance, like what happened in Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz. The goal of these raids is either to threaten or detain people in the hospital, and this could include the doctors themselves, or to loot the property of the hospital.

In Mwatana's first visit to Taiz in May 2015, the team saw an armored vehicle belonging to the Houthis at the entrance of the Yemen International Hospital. The team also saw Popular Resistance fighters, with medium-sized weapons, around Al Rawdhah Hospital and at its entrance. In the second visit to Taiz in October 2015, Mwatana team also saw an ambulance painted black with the name Ansar Al Sharia painted on it leaving Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

Due to the repeated attacks on the employees of Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital, as well as its inability to provide the medical supplies needed to continue its operations, the hospital decided to close its doors.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

Now, the number of public and private hospitals and medical centers that are still operating in the city of Taiz and its suburbs is around 11 hospitals and centers.

Mwatana found the remnants of weapons that were used in numerous attacks on Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz. When the pictures were analyzed by munitions experts, it was concluded that the weapons that were used in these attacks on the hospital are: highly explosive mortar shells, RPG-7 rockets, highly explosive tank shells, canon shells, and bullets from light weapons.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

The report will shed light on 31 incidents in which hospitals and medical facilities and crews in the city of Taiz were subject to violations during the course of armed ground conflict from April 2015 to March 2016. Additionally, the report covers 30 incidents that include airstrikes, aggression and looting against hospitals and medical service facilities and crews. The report will also discuss one incident of kidnapping of two individuals working in the medical field. A number of attacks on hospitals and medical crews led to the killing of at least two and the injury of at least seven workers in the medical service field, as well as patients and their families that were present in the hospitals that were targeted by these attacks.

On Monday, the 20th of April 2015, at 10:00 AM, employees of the Al Thawrah General Hospital were exposed to gunfire that killed an EMT, Abdulhaleem Al Asbahi, and injured an ambulance driver, Jamal Al Qadasi, while they were taking the people injured during armed clashes between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Popular Resistance in the area of the Old Airport in Taiz.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

On Sunday, the 26th of April 2015, at 9:30 AM, the ICU in the Al Thawrah General Hospital,

(173) Interview by Mwatana with an employee of the Al Rawdhah Hospital and an employee of the Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz, 20 May 2015.

(174) Visit by Mwatana to the Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz, 30 October 2015

(175) Mwatana received a copy of the statement issued by the hospital in August 2016.

(176) Mwatana has pictures of the remnants of the munitions used.

(177) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 5 July 2015.

which is on the fourth floor, was targeted by a shell that burned the unit and destroyed the medical equipment in it. There were two patients in the ICU when it was hit. One of them died instantly because of wounds sustained from the shell shrapnel. Two doctor's assistants were injured, and they were immediately taken to the Yemen International Hospital, in east Taiz, to receive medical treatment. After this attack, all of the departments of the hospital, except for the emergency room and the kidney dialysis center, stopped operating.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

On Monday, the 27th of April 2015, at around 11:00 PM, a shell fell on the courtyard of Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz, and it is believed that the shell came from the Republican Palace, which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

On Friday, the 1st of May 2015, at around 11:30 PM, Al Thawrah Hospital was shelled again. This time by two shells, one hit the emergency room from the east, while the other fell next to a vehicle owned by a hospital employee. Shrapnel from the shell broke the windows of the car, and some of the shrapnel reached the accounting department. It is believed that the source of the two shells was Hawdh Al Ashraaf, where Ansar Allah (Houthis) were positioned.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

One Friday, the 15th of May 2015, at around 5:30 PM, Al Thawrah General Hospital was targeted and struck by four shells. The first one hit the Dental Department, and shrapnel reached the Kidney Dialysis Department, damaging the equipment in the department and the electricity, which caused the department to stop operating for a whole day. The second shell hit the central labs and caused partial destruction of the department. The third shell hit the Prosthetics Department and damaged the contents of the department, and the fourth shell fell near the courtyard of the hospital from the east, near Shawlaq Mosque, and it caused minor injuries for four civilians that were passing by.⁽¹⁸¹⁾

Between Friday and Saturday, the 15th and 16th of May 2015, an armed group belonging to the Popular Resistance stole an ambulance from Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz.⁽¹⁸²⁾

On Monday, the 18th of May 2015, at around 9:15 PM, a shell fell on the courtyard of Al Thawrah Hospital, while an anti-aircraft shell fell on the back side of the hospital. The source of this shelling was the Republican Palace, where Ansar Allah (Houthis) forces were positioned.⁽¹⁸³⁾

On Saturday, the 23rd of May 2015, at 4:00 PM, two shells fell, one in front of the Al Thawrah General Hospital entrance, while the second fell behind the hospital.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

On Sunday, the 24th of May 2015, at around 7:00 AM, a shell fell on Al Thawrah General Hospital. It struck the old maternity section, which was being used to store medicine for the Kidney Dialysis Department. The shell destroyed the ceiling and windows of the storage area,

(178) See previous footnote.

(179) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 6 July 2015.

(180) See previous footnote.

(181) Interview by Mwatana with Abdulbasit Al Hajj and Nashwan Al Hussami, 6 July 2015.

(182) Interview by Mwatana with one of the employees of the Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz, 20 May 2015.

(183) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 6 July 2015.

(184) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 18 May 2015.

and destroyed the kidney dialysis medicine, which was estimated to be worth more than 35,000 USD. The shrapnel from the shell also destroyed the water network in the building designated for the Sino-German delegation, but currently used for the emergency room and burns center. Among the damage caused by the shell is the destruction of the windows on the second and third floors of the inpatient building, the internal medicine center (women), and the orthopedic department (women). It is believed that the shell came from the Special Security Forces base (Central Security), where Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh's forces are positioned. This base is to the northeast of the hospital.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

On Saturday, the 27th of June 2015, at around 9:30 AM, Al Thawrah Hospital was targeted by four shells that struck the doctor's housing, the emergency room, in front of the hospital morgue, and the burns center building. When this attack was carried out, there were armed members of the Popular Resistance located near the hospital building. It is believed that the source of these shells was also the Special Security Forces base (Central Security), where Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh's forces are located. This base is to the northeast of the hospital.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾

On Saturday, the 4th of July 2015, at around 10:30 AM, a group of armed men wearing civilian clothing and supported by forces loyal to former President Saleh raided the building of Al Buraihi Hospital, in Al Mudhaffar district. They took over the building by force and broke the outside locks. The hospital had been closed because it had been shelled. After they took over the hospital, it was turned into military barracks. These actions horrified the residents neighboring the hospital because of the intense fire and the military vehicles that surrounded the site.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ The hospital partially restarted its operations later.

On Saturday, the 4th of July 2015, at around 4:00 PM, a group of armed men from the Popular Resistance raided Al Thawrah Hospital and stole a vehicle owned by the Sino-German delegation. According to the testimony of one of the employees of the hospital, the armed group, which was formed of four men, went to the garage where a Toyota Hilux car owned by the Sino-German delegation was parked. They fired four shots at the door and windows of the car, opened the doors, and took the car out of the garage. Three other armed men came, with a car mechanic, and, after around a quarter of an hour, they turned the car on after the mechanic made a new key for the car, and they left. This incident horrified the doctors and nurses that lived in the doctor's housing in the hospital with their families.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

On Thursday, the 6th of August 2015, at around 11:00 PM, a shell fell on the financial department in Al Thawrah Hospital. The shell was fired by the Republican Guard forces and Ansar Allah (Houthis) because the building was in the area controlled by the Popular Resistance, according to what Nashwan Al Hussami said.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

Saeed Ali Hasan Al Ammari (70 years old), one of the people injured by the shell that fell on Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital said: "On Friday, the 14th of August 2015, at 5:30

(185) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Al Dumaini, Abdulbasit Al Hajj, and Nashwan Al Hussami, 24 May 2015.

(186) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 29 June 2015.

(187) Interview by Mwatana with Tawfeeq Al Shar'abi, 7 July 2015.

(188) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 7 July 2015.

(189) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 16 August 2015.

PM, I was in the emergency room going to the x-ray department. While I was walking in the hospital courtyard, a shell fell near me, and I sustained major injuries, as did Ahmad Al Qamhi (44 years old). An hour later, some people in the hospital took me to Al Rawdhah Hospital because there were no ambulances, and because there was heavy shelling on the neighborhood of Al Jumhoori Hospital. The shelling was coming from the direction of the Republican Palace. Due to my injuries, my leg was amputated. That same day, a shell hit my house, and it sustained a lot of damage.”⁽¹⁹⁰⁾

On Sunday, the 16th of August 2015, at around 9:30 PM, two shells fell on the emergency room at Al Thawrah General Hospital. One of the employees was injured.⁽¹⁹¹⁾

On Monday, the 17th of August 2015, at around 7:20 PM, a shell fell on Al Thawrah General Hospital, in front of the building of the kidney dialysis center. This shell injured Fadhl Muhammad Qassim (15 years old) and Fatimah Ahmad Hashim (35 years old) with shrapnel.⁽¹⁹²⁾

On Tuesday, the 18th of August 2015, at around 01:50 AM, two anti-aircraft shells fell on the courtyard of Al Thawrah General Hospital, near the kidney dialysis center, which caused the injury of a patient’s relative that was in the center. His name is Saeed Farhan Al Shar’abi (35 years old), and was injured by shrapnel in his left hand. On that same day, at around 7:00 PM, two anti-aircraft shells fell from Al Salal Hill in front of the Republican Palace, where Ansar Allah (Houthis) and Saleh’s forces are concentrated. The anti-aircraft shells struck the internal medicine inpatient department (men) at Al Thawrah General Hospital. This led to the destruction of the supplies and medical equipment and all of the windows in the center, and it spread fear among the medical employees that live and work in the hospital.⁽¹⁹³⁾

On Wednesday that 19th of August 2015, at 4:30 PM, two shells fell on Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital. Mwatana talked to one of the employees of the hospital, who said: “I was in my office, when suddenly I heard a loud explosion. I did not go out to see where the shell landed because I was afraid that another shell would follow the first. And that is what happened. Few minutes later, another shell fell inside the hospital, and the sound of the explosion scared everyone who was in the hospital. After ten minutes, I went out to see what had happened, and I found shrapnel everywhere, but no one had gotten injured.”⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

On the morning of Sunday, the 23rd of August 2015, three shells fell on the emergency room in the Yemeni International Hospital, which is one of the largest hospitals in the city. The Yemeni International Hospital is located in the area of Al Hawban, which is under the control of Ansar Allah (Houthis).

An administrator in the hospital says: “The hospital was shelled after the administration of the hospital had been trying to convince the Houthis to not station their fighters within the perimeters of the hospital, particularly inside the Sofitel Hotel, which is near the hospital. The administration also tried to convince them to refrain from driving their military cars and armored vehicles in

(190) Interview by Mwatana with Saeed Al Ammari, 31 August 2015.

(191) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 17 August 2015.

(192) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 18 August 2015.

(193) Interview by Mwatana with Nashwan Al Hussami, 19 August 2015.

(194) Interview by Mwatana with an employee of the Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz, 1 September 2015.

front of the entrance of the hospital and to refrain from launching attacks against the other side from locations close to the hospital. Bombing destroyed a part of the outer building, and this caused panic and fear among the patients in the hospital. We did not expect to be bombed. After around half an hour from when the building was bombed, Houthi military vehicles arrived and stationed next to the hospital.”⁽¹⁹⁵⁾

After the hospital was bombed and because of its unsafe location, the administration of the hospital decided to close it at the end of August 2015. According to interviews that were conducted by Mwatana, Ansar Allah (Houthis) took over the Sofitel Hotel on Tuesday, the 19th of August 2015. The location was used to launch attacks using a tank, and this frightened the patients and medical staff of the hospital.

Al Rawdhah Hospital, which is in an area that is under the control of the Popular Resistance, was targeted in a number of incidents by shelling and anti-aircraft shells. Yahiya Abdulghani Al Qubati (38 years old), a Managing Director in Al Rawdhah Hospital, says: “On Monday, the 28th of December 2015, at around 7:00 AM, the hospital was hit by a shell that hit the diesel tanks on the roof of the building causing the diesel to leak. The shell did not injure anyone, but it was launched from a location to the east of the building, where armed members of the Houthis are positioned. I live in the hospital, I was there at the time and was very scared. The effects of the shell are still very clear on the building, and the tanks were fixed recently. The hospital was hit again by anti-aircraft shells on the fifth floor of the building on Saturday, the 2nd of January 2016, at around 9:00 PM. It broke the windows of the floor, but there were no injuries.”⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

Al Qubati listed four other attacks on Al Rawdhah Hospital, none of which caused any injuries, during the period from August 2015 until January 2016.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

On Saturday, the 16th of January 2016, Al Hafidh Clinic, located in Al Masbah area in Al Mudhaffar district, was damaged after two shells fell near it. Ibrahim Saeed Naji (50 years old), the owner of the clinic and one of the doctors that work in it, says: “A shell fell, and I was at the time in my house, which is near the clinic. Because the explosion sounded like it was very close, I knew that it was near the clinic. After around 7 minutes, another shell fell, and one of the residents of the neighborhood called me and told me that the clinic’s guard had been injured by shrapnel, and that the clinic had sustained some damage. I went out immediately to see what had happened, and saw that a shell had exploded around half a meter from the clinic’s entrance. The other shell was around 3 or 4 meters away from where the first shell had fallen. I found out from some of the people in the neighborhood that the shells came from Al Hawban, where the Houthis are positioned, and it seems like they were targeting a site near the neighborhood that is under the control of the Popular Resistance. I went into the clinic to see the damage, and I found that all of the windows had been shattered, and the water tank had holes in it from the shrapnel. Shrapnel also penetrated the walls of some of the rooms in the clinic.”⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Ahmad Abdullah Mansour (45 years old), the General Manager of the National Central Public Health Labs of Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz, said that the center was hit by at least five

(195) Interview by Mwatana with an administrator in the Yemeni International Hospital, 23 August 2015.

(196) Interview by Mwatana with Yahiya Ahmad Al Qubati, 11 February 2016.

(197) See previous footnote.

(198) Interview by Mwatana with Ibrahim Saeed Naji, 25 February 2016.

attacks during the period from September 2015 until December 2015, and these attacks caused a lot of damage to the labs and equipment.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

There was a Popular Resistance tank positioned behind the center, and it was shooting towards ‘Al Harreer’ area, which is around 2 or 3 kilometers away, and where Ansar Allah (Houthis) fighters were positioned. When shelling back at the tank near the center, the shells hit the center from one side.

One of the employees of the center says: “When the tank was firing shells, we were in the center. It was around noon. I was very scared, and we felt like we could die at any moment.”⁽²⁰⁰⁾

According to the testimony collected by Mwatana, the center stopped being hit by shells after the tank was driven away.

On Sunday, the 20th of March 2016, armed men from the Popular Resistance raided Al Thawrah General Hospital and kidnapped two employees from there.

Asmahan Ali Muhammad (30 years old female), a doctor in the hospital’s lab and an eyewitness of the incident, says: “At 11:00 AM, two armed men who covered their faces and heads in black raided the building and the manager’s office. In a very provocative manner, they took two of my colleagues: Waleed Muhammad Al Himyari (30 years old), the manager’s secretary, and Ahmad Muqbil (35 years old), a doctor and the head of the department of anesthesiology. They started asking for Abdulbasit Salam, the manager, and Nashwan Al Rabasi, the manager of the emergency room. They went around the different departments of the hospital looking for them, but they did not find them. After the armed men left with my two colleagues, I followed them out, opposing what they were doing to my colleagues. They told me ‘We will take them to Sayilah’⁽²⁰¹⁾. They also told me: ‘If you do not keep quiet then you are an infidel, and we will take you with them.’” Asmahan adds: “Then, they took them on a black car which had four or five more armed men on. They caused fear and panic among the medical staff in the hospital, as well as the patients.”⁽²⁰²⁾

Waleed Muhammad Al Himyari says: “I was and Ahmad Muqbil detained by an armed group, and we were taken Personal Status Department and kept there for an hour. We were released after calls were made by some activists. Before and during our detention, we were threatened multiple times, including death threats.”⁽²⁰³⁾

(199) Interview by Mwatana with Ahmad Abdullah Mansour, 16 February 2016.

(200) Interview by Mwatana with Fawzi Ahmad Noman, 16 February 2016.

(201) A well-known location where the bodies of the people that were executed are thrown, according to the eyewitness.

(202) Interview by Mwatana with Asmahan Ali Muhammad, 20 April 2016.

(203) Interview by Mwatana with Waleed Muhammad Al Himyari, 21 April 2016.

Mwatana obtains a document from Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz, listing the violations in which it was the victim of. The document shows the different attacks on the hospital, including shells falling on the hospital and gunfire targeting the hospital. The document also shows the direction that the shells came from.⁽²⁰⁴⁾

Mwatana also received two documents that show the violations against Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz, including shells and gunfire.⁽²⁰⁵⁾

(204) Mwatana has a copy of the document that includes a list of the attacks on the Al Thawrah General Hospital in Taiz.

(205) Mwatana has a copy of the document that includes a list of the attacks on the Al Jumhoori General Teaching Hospital in Taiz.

Chapter Four:

School Targeting, Occupying and Using for Military Purposes



■ Legal Framework:

In addition to the requirement of the international humanitarian law to differentiate between military targets and civilian buildings in attacks, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2225/2015 on children and armed conflicts calls on all parties to the conflict to respect the civilian character of schools. The Resolution calls on the parties to not only stop targeting of schools, it also calls for putting an end to using schools for military purposes. The resolution expresses deep concern that the military use of schools may render schools legitimate targets of attack

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Taiz in April 2015, Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Popular Resistance have occupied most of the public and private schools that are located near areas of armed clashes or the frontlines inside the city or around it. The schools were used for variant purposes including use as headquarters, barracks, kitchens, and supply stores.

Ansar Allah (Houthis) have taken control of the schools that are in the eastern parts around the city of Taiz, while the Popular Resistance has taken control of the schools that are in the southern, northern, and western parts.

Further, in August 2015, after taking control of the center of the city, the Popular Resistance took control of the schools inside the city. Recently, the Popular Resistance has vacated a number of schools located in the center of the city to have them prepared for the 2016/2017 school year. A number of the schools in the city of Taiz have been used as shelters for the internally displaced families from areas of the conflict.

Due to the occupation of schools, and using them for military purposes, schools and civilians have been put at risk, and the education process in the governorate of Taiz has been affected negatively. Schools were stopped in 2015. At the end of the year, there was a local initiative by employees and teachers, as well as local volunteers, to restart schools again, using mosques and empty or under construction buildings to catch up with the schooling that had been missed.

During the period from July 2015 to March 2016, Mwatana documented no less than 24 cases of schools that were occupied and used for military purposes or were damaged by shells during

the period of the armed ground conflict in the city of Taiz. Mwatana documented the occupation of no less than seven schools by Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the occupation of no less than seven other schools by the Popular Resistance.

Mwatana has also documented alternating the occupation of at least 7 other schools by the parties to the conflict. They are currently occupied by the Popular Resistance making a total of 14 schools that are currently occupied by the Popular Resistance. The occupation is based on the military progress that is achieved during varying periods of time. Also, at least 3 schools were damaged by attacks launched during the war.

■ The Incidents:

Ansar Allah (Houthis) and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh control the Ammar bin Yasser and the Ali Saif Al Tayyar schools in Al Salh district.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ The Hayel Complex for Girls is used as a base by the Abu Al Abbas Brigades of the Popular Resistance. There are also military barracks belonging to the Popular Resistance in a number of schools, including the New Saba School for Boys and Taiz Al Kubra High School, which is being used as a prison by the Popular Resistance. The 35th Armored Brigade loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi, occupies the 13th of July School in Al Nashmah, and it is used as the headquarters of the base and as a prison.⁽²⁰⁷⁾

When visited the city of Taiz, Mwatana verified the Popular Resistance's usage of the BaKatheer School in the city of Taiz as a prison for Houthi prisoners.⁽²⁰⁸⁾

Dar Al Quran Primary and Secondary School located in Al Musali neighborhood in Al Mudhaffar district, was closed on the 29th of May 2015 by the Popular Resistance. The school was used as housing for the Popular Resistance's fighters until the 24th of September 2015, when it was emptied and reopened as a school.⁽²⁰⁹⁾

Ansar Allah (Houthis) took over and closed Al Riyadhah School on the 19th of June 2015. Later, the school was bombarded by an airstrikes launched by the Saudi-led Arab Coalition.⁽²¹⁰⁾

Ansar Allah (Houthis) took over the Uqbah bin Nafea Primary and Secondary School in Tha'bat neighborhood in Al Salh district on the 4th of July 2015. They turned it into a shelter for their fighters and also used it as weapons storage. On the 9th of January 2016, the group left the school because the Popular Resistance was advancing, but the school was not reopened because it was on the frontlines of the armed clashes between the two groups.⁽²¹¹⁾

(206) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents during July 2015 and August 2016.

(207) See previous footnote.

(208) Visit by Mwatana to the BaKatheer School in the city of Taiz, 31 October 2015.

(209) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents, 30 July 2016.

(210) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents, 21 July 2016.

(211) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents, 30 July 2016.

The Hasm Brigades of the Popular Resistance have occupied Al Sha'b School for Boys in Hawdh Al Ashraaf area in Al Qahirah district, since the 28th of July 2015. The brigades use the school as a shelter for its fighters and a military training camp.⁽²¹²⁾

Ansar Allah (Houthis) occupied Al Hayah Primary and Secondary School in the Old Airport area in Al Mudhaffar district on the 28th of March 2015. Later, the school was taken over by the Popular Resistance after Ansar Allah retreated from that area on the 13th of March 2016. The Popular Resistance used the school as a shelter for its fighters, and later on as a prison.⁽²¹³⁾

The 26th of September Primary and Secondary School in Saynah in Al Mudhaffar district, was occupied by Ansar Allah (Houthis) on the 28th of April 2015. The school was used as military barracks by the group. Later, on the 19th of April 2016, the Popular Resistance took over the school.⁽²¹⁴⁾

During February and March of 2016, the Yemeni Iraqi School in Al Dharbah neighborhood in Al Mudhaffar district, was struck by shells on at least two separate incidents. When investigating one of these attacks, Mwatana found out that a leader in the Popular Resistance, along with other armed men, came to the school on two military vehicles, and they stored weapons in the school during the early morning of that day. When the people of the neighborhood objected to the school being used for this purpose, the weapons stored in the school were taken out in the afternoon of the same day, shortly after which the school was shelled.⁽²¹⁵⁾

(212) See previous footnote.

(213) See previous footnote.

(214) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents, 29 July 2016.

(215) Interviews by Mwatana with local residents, 19 October 2016.

Chapter Five:

Recruiting and Using Children



■ Legal Framework:

The use of child soldiers by armed groups and forces is prohibited by the customary international law, the Geneva Protocols, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, and, recently, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

According to the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it must be ensured that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not recruited into armed forces or armed groups. The Geneva Protocols state that, in the case that children between 15 and 18 years of age are recruited, priority must be given to the ones that are older.

■ The Incidents:

Ansar Allah (Houthis), and the Popular Resistance have recruited children for military purposes, including guard duties, manning security checkpoints, and direct combat operations inside the city of Taiz as well as in other frontlines in the governorate. The child soldiers from both sides are subject to being detained and imprisoned by the other side during combat operations.

During the period between April 2015 and March 2016, Mwatana documented at least 27 cases of children recruitment and use for military purposes by Ansar Allah (Houthis). Similarly, the organization documented at least 28 cases of children recruitment and use for military purposes by the Popular Resistance and forces loyal to President Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi. The age of these children ranges from 12 to 17 years old.

Recruitment of children is at increasing levels, particularly after the military intervention of the Saudi-led Arab Coalition on March 26, 2015. The United Nations documented 762 cases of child recruitment (all boys), and the majority of the recruitments were by Ansar Allah (Houthis), who were responsible for 72% of the cases, with 69 of these cases in Taiz.⁽²¹⁶⁾

(216) The website of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict - <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries-caac/yemen/> (visited on 2 November 2016).



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Chapters from Hell

Violations of the International Humanitarian Law in the Armed Ground Conflict in Taiz

The city of Taiz is the most prominent Yemeni city that was reached and torn apart by the violent conflict. This city and some of its rural areas present a clear manifestation of the darkest and most tragic forms of war. It also manifests the heavy toll of war's most grave violations, such as killing through various means, destruction, and blockades. These violations have affected civilians and undermined their lives during the entire period of the armed conflict the city has witnessed.

Thousands of civilians in Taiz found themselves stuck between the two sides of the conflict, where they face various forms of violations. Among the most prominent violations are killing and maiming, attacking medical staff and medical facilities, targeting schools and occupying them for military purposes, and military recruitment of children, in addition to Ansar Allah's forcing a suffocating blockade from time to time on the city to block the entry of medical and humanitarian relief and aid. Similarly, the Popular Resistance assaulted relief organizations and humanitarian aid warehouses, and it carried out summary executions.

In its report, *Chapters from Hell*, Mwatana Organization for Human Rights documents a number of incidents where hundreds of civilians were killed and injured, in addition to the livelihood of thousands that was damaged during the armed ground conflict and the violations of international humanitarian law that were committed by the parties to the conflict between April 2015 and March 2016. Committing these violations is still ongoing after March 2016.

This report contains 177 incidents, investigated by Mwatana, where international humanitarian law and the customary humanitarian law were violated. The organization's team has also collected testimonies regarding the blockade and restrictions imposed on entry of food, commercial and medical goods, and humanitarian aid into the city.

Regarding indiscriminate attacks and incidents of firing bullets and anti-aircraft ammunition, this report "Chapters from Hell" sheds light on 32 indiscriminate attacks and 22 incidents of firing live ammunition and anti-aircraft shells. In these attacks and incidents, at least 103 civilians were killed, including 50 children and 14 women. Furthermore, 229 civilians were injured, including 98 children and 16 women, during the period between April 2015 and March 2016.

This report also includes 9 incidents of field executions, 4 incidents of attacking humanitarian organizations and looting humanitarian aid, and 31 incidents of attacking and shelling on hospitals and medical, looting their properties, and kidnapping medical workers, in addition to other incidents of targeting schools, occupying them for military purposes, and child use and recruitment.

Mwatana for Human Rights:

Mwatana for Human Rights is an independent Yemeni organization concerned with defending and protecting human rights. It works through investigations and field research to obtain accurate and objective accounts of the incidents that fall within its mandate in order to stop and expose human rights violations, and to provide support and justice for its victims and hold accountable those responsible for the violations and to create effective safeguards in legislation and policy against repetition of such violations.



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