



## Yemen Security and Humanitarian Review September 2018

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### Glossary

Saudi-led Coalition	Includes Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain.
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
GoY	Government of Yemen
STC	Southern Transition Council
WFP	World Food Programme
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA	UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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In the text when '*Comment: ...*' appears in *italics* and the subsequent text is also in *italics*, this information is not fact, but the opinion of the author.

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## 1. Military and Political Developments Map source: RiskIntelligence <https://twitter.com/riskstaff>



### UN PEACE EFFORTS

The UN's special envoy, Martin Griffiths, had arranged for an all parties peace consultations in Geneva on 6 Sept 2018. However, the Houthi contingent failed to attend due to the following 3 key demands not being met:

- The transport of wounded rebels to Oman.
- The repatriation of those who had already received treatment there
- A guarantee that the Houthi delegation would be allowed to return to Sanaa from Geneva.

Griffiths continued to persevere talks with all sides, notably returning to Sana'a on the 16 Sept to meet the Houthi leadership. In addition to trying to organise another peace consultation in Geneva, talks include the reopening of Sana'a airport to commercial traffic in October, prisoner release, and the payment of salaries to government employees.

*Comment: In recent interviews Griffiths is positive about a Geneva meeting with all sides.*

### UAE-LED OFFENSIVE ON AL HUDAYDAH

Intense fighting continued in Hudaydah governorate through the first half of September, escalating significantly after the failed peace consultations on 6 Sept 2018 with a resumption in the offensive on Hudaydah city. UAE-led forces made significant advances, cutting the main road linking Hudaydah to Sana'a. By 18 Sept, they had taken new territory to the East of Hudaydah city, partially capturing 3 important road junctions on the route linking Hudaydah and Sana'a. However, the UAE-led forces only made limited advances into the southern suburbs of the city. Reportedly, a large WFP storage facility based in the Red Sea Mill, containing 4500 metric tons of food - enough to feed 3.5 million people for one month, was shelled on 8 Sept. On the same day up to 35 civilians were killed or wounded when a bus depot was struck in either an airstrike or by shelling. On 14 Sept, the WFP reported one of its warehouses had also been mortared.

*Comment: The targeting of civilians, civilian infrastructure, medical facilities, and humanitarian facilities is becoming a common feature of the conflict. It is most likely that the WFP would have informed all sides in the conflict the location of their facilities. The above incidents reinforce the view that the targeting is a deliberate strategy.*



### THE DEVALUATION OF THE YEMENI RIYAL

The Yemeni Riyal has declined steeply against the USD throughout 2018. In Jan 2018, 1 USD bought 380 YR, on 2 Sept it was 620 YR. Because of the war it is difficult for the Government of Yemen (GoY) to halt the decline due to its inability to implement effective monetary policy, the devastation of the local economy and the lack of enough foreign exchange revenue to strengthen the Riyal's position.

Over 80% of Yemen's food needs are imported and UNOCHA report the prices of basic commodities have increased by at least 10%. Many businesses and retailers have closed or started to only accept foreign currency. UNOCHA also estimates that the recent depreciation could lead to a further 3.5 million Yemenis becoming food insecure adding to the 8.4 million who are already in this category.

At the start of Oct, one US Dollar bought 800 YR and the Government of Saudi Arabia injected 200 million USD into Yemen's Central Bank to build reserves and stop the Riyal's decline.

### DIVISION IN TAIZ

The GoY control much of Taiz city, whilst the governorate is mostly in the hands of the Houthis. However, there is little cohesion amongst the armed elements in the city supporting the government. Several armed groups and regular army units are fighting the Houthis and themselves in the city. The armed groups have diverging political allegiances and varying degrees of connection with different units in the GoY military. This power dynamic has resulted in regular violent clashes, as these actors compete for influence, revenue and territory. Tax collection and extortion of local businesses are one of the main sources of funding. In recent months there were violent clashes between the Salafist Abu Abbas brigades and Islah-affiliated units. However, security measures taken by President Hadi and Governor Amin Mahmoud were moderately successful in resolving hostilities and implementing further security reforms.

*Comment: It is hoped that these measures will improve humanitarian access to Taiz which has been notoriously difficult due to the extortionate activities of the armed groups.*

### SOUTHERN PROTESTS AND RIOTS

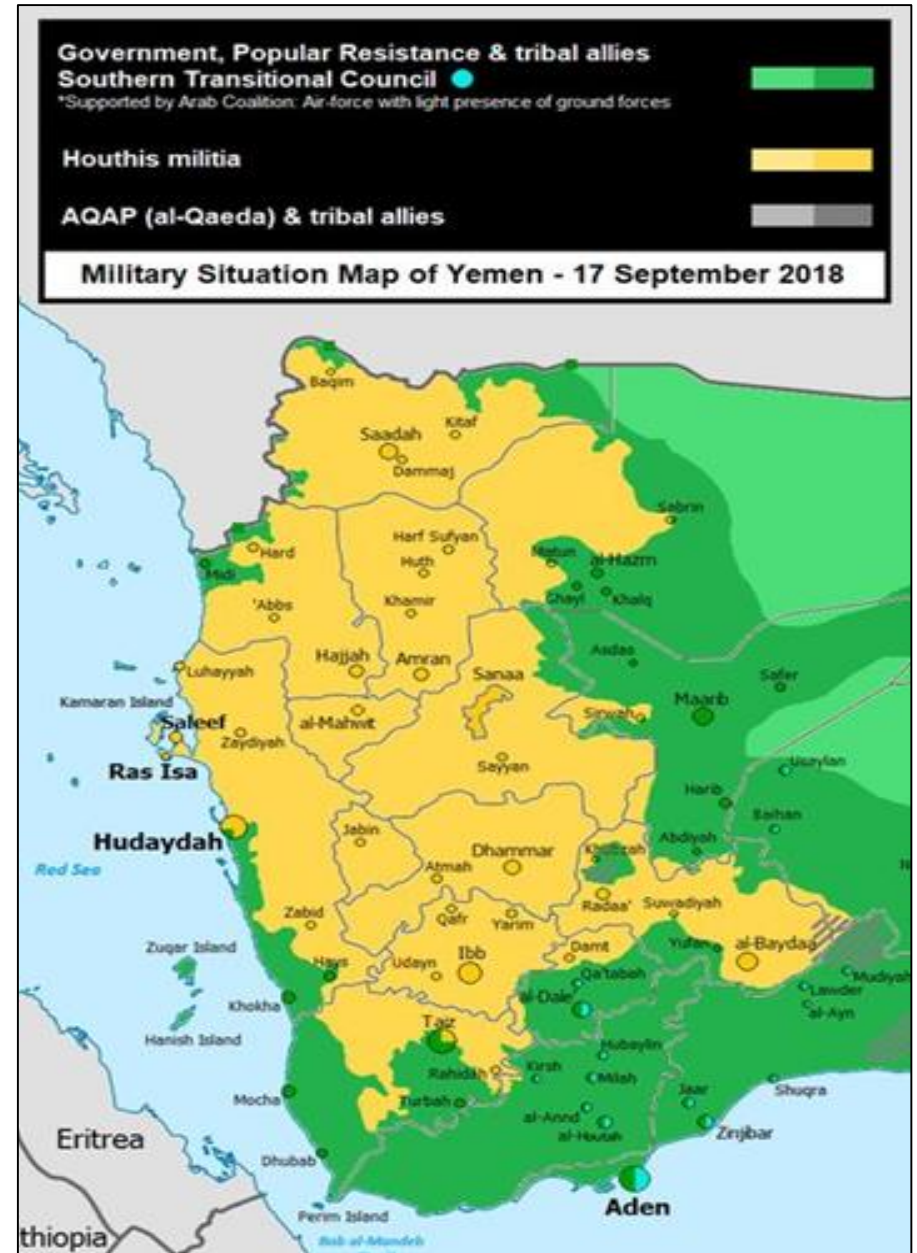
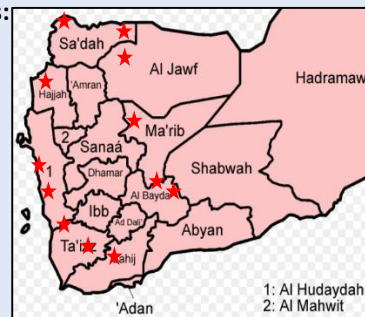
In Sept 2018 protests took place across Aden, and spread to other southern governorates such as Lahaj, Abyan and A-Dhali'. The reasons for the popular civil unrest was the decline of the Yemeni Riyal and the subsequent rise in prices, and the lack of basic public services.

*Comment: Whilst it appears the protests were originally a popular response, the situation was soon exploited by political groups, notably the separatists Southern Transition Council (STC) who continued to organise protests into October.*

### ACTIVE FRONTS

In addition to fighting in Hudaydah and on the corridor held by the UAE-led ground forces south of the city, in Sept 2018 fighting also took place in the governorates:

- al Bayda
- Lahaj
- Taiz
- Marib
- Hajjah
- Sa'dah
- al Jawf.



**SAUDI COALITION AIRSTRIKES** – In the first 2 weeks of Sept 2018, the Saudi coalition carried out approx. 36 airstrikes, of which 21 reportedly caused civilian casualties. *Comment: Despite international criticism of the high civilian casualty count, a change in Saudi targeting policy is not expected.*

## 2. OCHA Yemen Humanitarian Access Snapshot – August to September 2018

### ANALYSIS

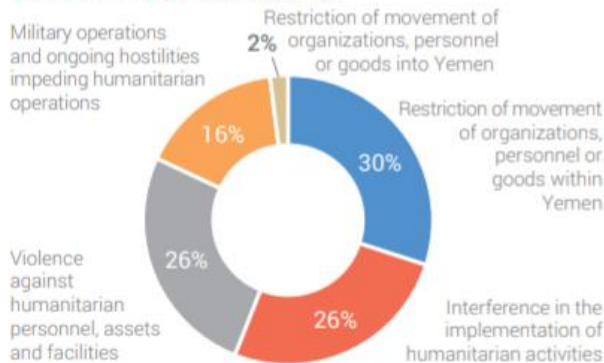
**Armed conflict exacerbates access challenges in many parts of Yemen.** More than 70 per cent of access incidents took place in the 27 most conflict-affected districts and included all five types of access impediments. The 37 incidents reported in Al Hudaydah were concentrated in areas with active frontlines, including At-Tuhayat, Ad Durahimi and Al Hawak districts. Nonetheless, the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) and regular programme response activities from Al Hudaydah and Aden Hubs helped tens of thousands of households in Al Hudaydah during the reporting period.

**Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) are operating in 22 governorates in all districts reporting cholera cases.** Active armed conflict has impacted response rate and coverage of RRTs in parts of Sa'ada and Al Hudaydah. For example, the rate of RRT response in Al Mansuriyah district (Al Hudaydah) was 30 per cent, in comparison to coverage rates of up to 85 per cent in other parts of the country. Despite these challenges, more than 1.2 million households have benefitted from RRT response in 2018.

**Needs assessments are underway across Yemen to inform response planning.** Cluster and multi-cluster assessment teams are working with local authorities to resolve delays and impediments to the data collection process.

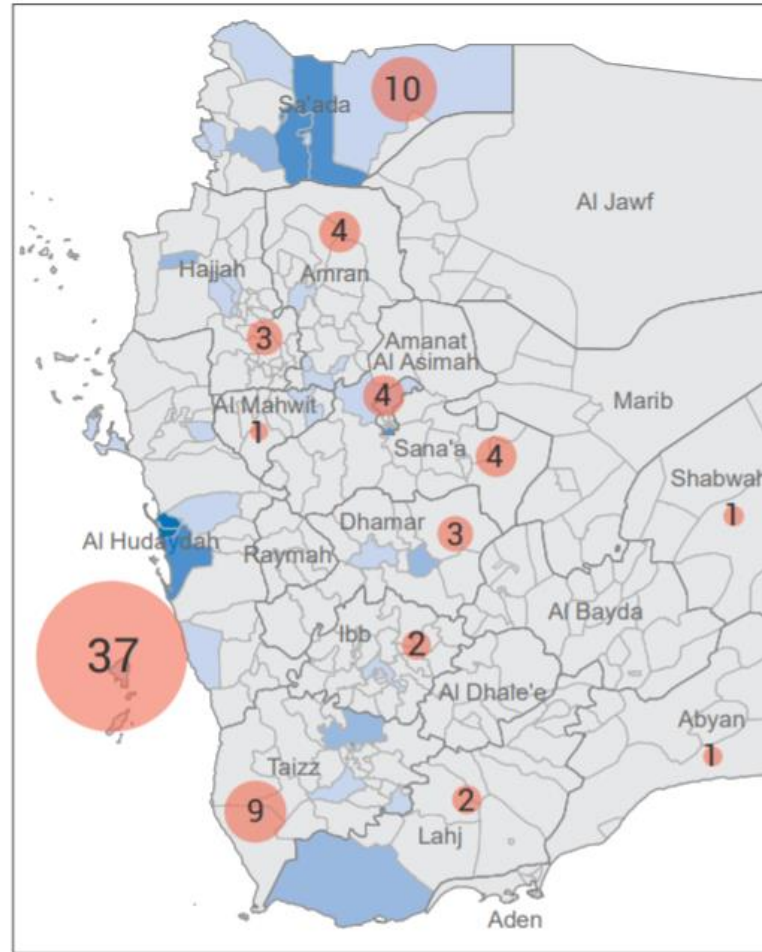
**Humanitarian partners face persistent interference in their operations.** The 21 cases reported in August-September were spread across eight governorates – only restrictions of humanitarian movement were observed in more locations during this period. Humanitarian partners may face greater interference in the weeks, amid depreciation of the Yemeni Rial and escalating armed conflict in many areas.

### Overview of reported incidents



**81** incidents reported over the period

**>70%** of access incidents were in 27 conflict-affected districts



**Methodology:** This snapshot is based on humanitarian partners' reports of access-related issues during a two-month period. Although the report indicates wider access dynamics encountered in many parts of Yemen, it only covers areas where organisations have been able to maintain a sustained humanitarian presence.



Number of incidents by governorate    Number of incidents by district



\*Estimated number of people affected by the interruption of services or delays in delivery of assistance.

### Clusters affected

