



THE YEMEN TREND

July
2017



RESEARCH . ANALYSIS . ADVISORY

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

Executive Overview

The humanitarian crisis continued to worsen in July, and UN officials said they have had to redirect resources toward combatting the cholera crisis at the expense of efforts to prevent malnutrition and famine. Nearly 190,000 new cases of cholera were reported in July, bringing the cumulative total since April 27 to 436,625, with 1,915 associated deaths. Mid-way through the month Yemen's cholera crisis became the worst on record for a single year, surpassing in less than three months the number of cases reported in Haiti in 2011. The epidemic appears to have peaked by the beginning of July, but health authorities cautioned that the crisis is by no means over and the Red Cross predicted by the end of 2017 the total number of suspected cases will exceed 600,000.

On the political front, the Southern Transitional Council held a rally in Aden on July 7 and released a statement on July 9 establishing new departments and banning the Muslim Brotherhood. UN Envoy Ould Cheikh briefed the Security Council on July 12 and continued to call on the warring parties to work toward the proposals he presented in May. The envoy said he was in direct contact with the Houthis and that he plans to invite the Houthi/GPC delegation to resume discussions "as soon as possible." Meanwhile, the Hadi government reiterated its willingness to move forward with the envoy's proposals.

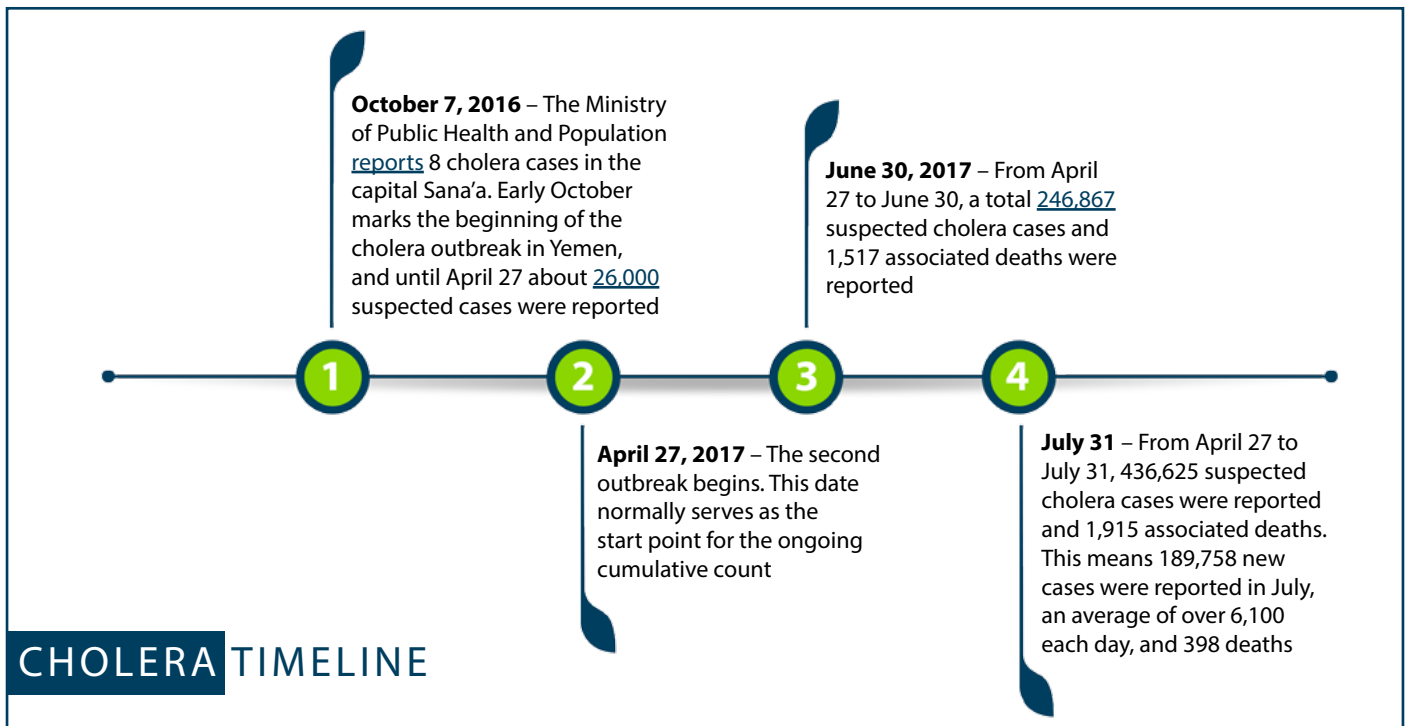
UAE-led forces claimed a major, albeit belated victory in Taiz, where they captured one of Yemen's largest military camps, Khaled Bin Walid, on July 26. The camp lies near a crucial intersection in Mouza district linking Mocha port, Taiz city, and Hodeidah, enabling coalition and Hadi-aligned forces to block Houthi/Saleh reinforcements from the north and stabilize western Taiz, paving the way for an offensive into Hodeidah. That same week, the Houthi/Saleh alliance launched multiple ballistic missiles into Saudi territory, one reportedly travelling 930 km past the Yemen border. Major clashes took place in Taiz, Marib, Hajjah, Sa'ada, Shabwa, Sana'a, Al-Baydha, Al-Jawf, and the Karash front in northern Lahj, which Prime Minister Ahmed Bin Dagher visited late in the month.

Timeline

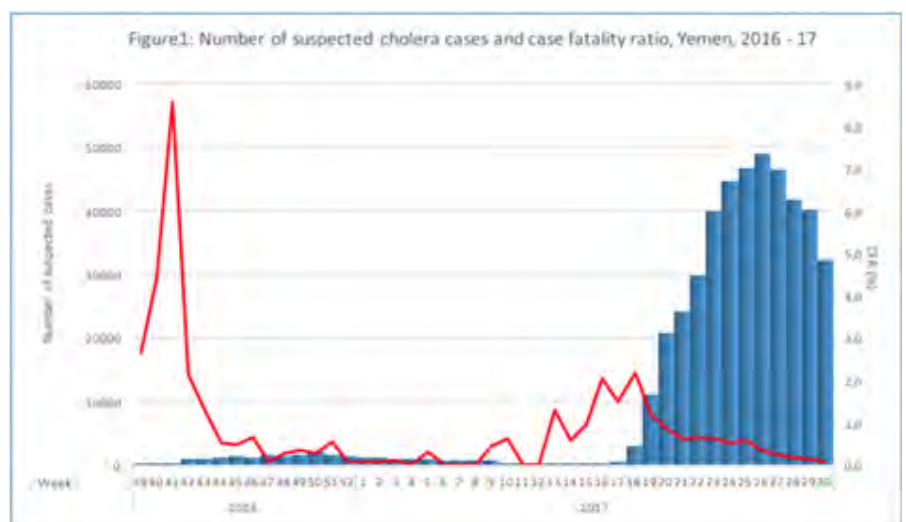
- 7-July** Southern Transitional Council (STC) holds a large rally in Aden
- 9-July** STC releases statement establishing departments and banning the Muslim Brotherhood
- 12-July** UN envoy, humanitarian coordinator, and senior health officials brief the Security Council
- 18-July** US Senate committee holds meeting on four famine countries, with focus on Yemen
- 18-July** Coalition airstrike in Mouza district of Taiz kills 18 internally displaced civilians
- 26-July** UAE-led forces capture Khaled Bin Walid camp in Taiz, one of the country's largest
- 27-July** Houthi/Saleh alliance fires ballistic missile deep into Saudi territory
- 31-July** Cholera count reaches 436,625 (1,915 associated deaths) since April 27

Humanitarian and Economic Trends

The number of suspected cholera cases is expected to exceed 600,000 by the end of the year, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Between April 27 and July 31 a total of 436,625 suspected cholera cases were reported, with an average increase of over 6,000 per day in July. This cumulative count is already the highest on record for any country in a single year, exceeding the 350,000 reported cases Haiti experienced when the crisis there peaked in 2011. It took less than three months for Yemen to accumulate over 351,000 cases, between the period from April 27 to July 16.



The daily number of new cholera cases being reported decreased throughout July, but health authorities cautioned the numbers do not tell the full story. According to the World Health Organization's epidemiology bulletin for week 30 (July 23-29), the outbreak peaked during week 26 (June 25 to July 1), when the average daily cases reported neared 7,000. During week 30 at the end of July the rate had decreased to under 5,000 new cases per day, on average. This is displayed in the WHO graph below, with the red line showing that the case fatality ratio (CFR) has also been steadily declining.



“This data should be interpreted with caution,” the WHO said, “given a backlog in the analysis of suspected cases. Even if the outbreak is beginning to slow in some areas, thousands are falling sick every day.” The WHO and Oxfam also warned the rainy season from July to September is expected to increase the risk of cholera spreading further.

The plan to send 1 million doses of cholera vaccine to Yemen was cancelled due to concerns that it would be ineffectual and resources could be better allocated elsewhere. The WHO, which announced in June it would be carrying out the vaccination campaign, said the vaccines will be sent to other in-need countries instead. Christian Lindmeier, a WHO spokesman, [explained](#) the vaccine is supposed to be administered in areas that have not yet been exposed to cholera, whereas most of Yemen's districts have already been impacted. "Experience shows that vaccinating once a cholera outbreak is well established in a community has little to no impact on preventing further spread and on the course of the outbreak itself," the spokesman [said](#). According to him, both warring parties agreed to cancel the vaccination campaign.

According to IRIN, the plan was scrapped following a July 10 meeting in Sana'a between local authorities, the UN, and aid agencies. In addition to logistical impediments, including that the vaccines need to be kept in cold storage and patients have to receive a follow-up dose, it appears there were also important political considerations. "Several sources told IRIN that some factions in the Houthis-Saleh-run Ministry of Health in Sana'a expressed opposition to the vaccine, and aid partners were concerned that a lack of cooperation would make delivery difficult," the [article](#) notes. Health officials explained that rather than being cancelled, the plan may instead be delayed until early next year, when the outbreak would hopefully be over and the vaccine would therefore be more effective.

Funds are being diverted to fight cholera at the expense of other efforts, according to the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen. "Agencies have had to use resources which they had programmed otherwise, for example for food security or malnutrition," Jamie McGoldrick [said](#). The UN News Centre said on July 11 that unless \$200 million in additional funds are provided by the international community to combat the cholera outbreak, more of the existing funds allocated for malnutrition will be reprogrammed. In his [briefing](#) to the Security Council on July 12 Stephen O'Brien, UN under-secretary for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said \$250 million in additional funds are required, and said only \$47 million had been received.

The harvest this year is expected to be worse than last "due to the poor rains combined with the deterioration of access to farmlands," according to the director-general of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Jose Graziano da Silva. Crop production was already down around 40 percent in 2016 compared to pre-war levels. [Speaking](#) to the UN Security Council on July 12, da Silva stressed two points: lack of access is an ever greater problem than lacking funds, and capacity building for the rural population, comprising about 70 percent of the population, needs to be prioritized – "we save lives by saving livelihoods," he said.

The scale of the humanitarian disaster is likely underestimated, multiple health authorities indicated in July. In his July 12 [statement](#) to the Security Council, Stephen O'Brien said beyond the number of people who have reportedly died from cholera, "probably many more [have died] in the many very remote areas of Yemen we can't reach." Meanwhile, FAO's director-general said the often-quoted Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) figures have worsened since the last report in March. Also, in July many newspapers reported the UN increased its total for the number of people requiring assistance to 20.7 million, including Reuters, which [said](#) it was the cholera outbreak that prompted this re-evaluation. However, the UN OCHA raised the total from 18.8 to 20.7 million in its [Periodic Monitoring Review January-April 2017](#) when only around 55,000 cases had been reported, meaning the total may rise further still.

The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on July 18 called "[The Four Famines: Root Causes and a Multilateral Action Plan](#)". Presiding over the hearing, Senator Todd Young placed focus on Yemen and called on the Saudi coalition to allow cranes into the port of Hodeida. David Beasley, the executive director of the WFP, said he had requested in person that the king and crown prince of Saudi Arabia allow the cranes to reach Hodeidah but as of July 18 he had not received a response. Senator Young argued (time 2:14:10) "a case can definitely be made that the Saudis are in fact violating customary international humanitarian law rule 55," which relates to allowing humanitarian aid to civilians unimpeded, and concluded "I think we're seeing a disturbing pattern of behavior from the Saudi-led coalition."

A bank robbery in Aden on July 13 led several banks to go on strike. The incident gained widespread attention in part because it was captured on [video](#). A dozen banks in Aden [reportedly](#) sent a letter to the Central Bank of Yemen and the Aden governor demanding improvements to local security, stating they would strike for three days. However, [according](#) to Asharq Al-Awsat the robbers were apprehended and a meeting was held on July 17 by the acting governor of the Central Bank and the deputy ministers of finance and interior, who convinced the banks to reopen.

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The one context that I'm really extremely worried about is Yemen. I happened to be there just at the beginning of the cholera outbreak. I visited two hospitals in Sana'a, and I've never seen scenes like the ones that I saw in my 27 years with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Hospitals completely overwhelmed by hundreds of families streaming into these hospitals... up to four patients in one single hospital bed, patients under hospital beds, others in the garden of the courtyards of the hospital with IV drips hanging from trees. Unbelievable scenes.

Dominik Stillhart, director of operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 18

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Political Developments

The Southern Transitional Council (STC) held a large rally in Aden on July 7. The demonstration came days after Council President Aidarous Al-Zubaidi and Vice President Hani Bin Buraik returned from a regional tour. In June the two leaders [reportedly](#) met former Vice President Khaled Bahah in the UAE, and were rumored to have met Ahmed Saleh, son of Ali Abdullah Saleh and former head of the Republican Guard. Hadi sacked Aidarous and Bin Buraik as Aden governor and minister of state, respectively, on April 27. On May 4 they held their first joint rally, which led to the STC being formally established on May 11. The dates of the rallies, May 4 and July 7, are significant because they mark 23 years to the day since the beginning and end of the 1994 civil war.

From July 5-9 most of the 26 STC members convened in Aden, where a series of meetings culminated in a [statement](#) on July 9 establishing a number of departments and appointing the department heads. Notably, the statement says the STC bans the Muslim Brotherhood, lumping the group in with Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Houthis as banned “terrorist and extremist” groups. It is generally understood that the Muslim Brotherhood in the Yemeni context refers to the Islah Party, but like the UAE’s ban on the Brotherhood, Islah is not officially mentioned by name.

Background on the peace process

In early June, the Hadi government told the UN it is “fully prepared to discuss” the proposals put forward by the UN envoy in May. Envoy Ould Cheikh’s plan is centered around preventing a military operation to retake Hodeidah port and in parallel resuming salary payments to all civil servants. A military committee made up of officers who have not participated directly in the conflict and who are respected by both sides would “manage the security and the military aspects of Hodeida,” while a financial committee would develop a mechanism to have state funds collected from all parts of Yemen disbursed to government employees on both sides. These steps are also intended to serve as confidence building measures toward a national cessation of hostilities and the resumption of peace talks.

In his [briefing](#) to the UN Security Council on May 30, the envoy said “the reluctance of the key parties to embrace the concessions needed for peace, or even discuss them, remains extremely troubling.” During his visit to Sana’a from May 22 to May 24, the Houthi/GPC delegation in Sana’a refused to meet with Ould Cheikh to discuss the framework for the agreement, and in early June the Supreme Political Council president, Saleh Al-Sammad, called him biased and “not welcome” anymore. Despite this, the UN Security Council reaffirmed its backing of the envoy in a June 15 presidential statement and called on the warring parties to engage with his proposals. The degree to which the envoy’s efforts are succeeding is a matter of debate, given that the coalition and Hadi government continued to build their case for retaking Hodeidah port and fighting raged on in coastal Taiz, indicating the potential operation may hinge more on military realities than political negotiations.

For more background, see the [June 2017](#) issue of the Yemen Trend.

The UN envoy briefed the Security Council on July 12 and encouraged the warring parties to work toward the proposals he put forth in May. He reiterated that the Hadi government has responded positively to his proposals, which Yemen's permanent representative to the UN, Khaled Alyemany, confirmed at the same Council meeting. Meanwhile, Ould Cheikh said he was "in direct contact with Ansar Allah (the Houthis), which is cause for optimism," and he [told](#) the Council he intends to invite representatives of the Houthi/Saleh alliance to restart discussions as soon as possible. However, indicating relations between the Houthis and Ould Cheikh have not improved, on July 17 the official spokesman of the Houthi delegation to the peace process [said](#) "The UN is about to change its envoy to Yemen. We hope the secretary-general rectifies the mistakes that were made previously which diluted its (the UN's) role and his (the Envoy's) absolute subordination to the countries of aggression."

In Cairo on July 17 the UN envoy met the Arab League secretary-general, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, who [said](#) there is consensus among Arab states for a political solution based on the three references. At the end of his trip to Egypt on July 20, Ould Cheikh's office released a [statement](#) saying that "the texts of a Hodeidah proposal that have circulated are inaccurate and that the Hodeidah initiative is only part of a comprehensive plan of action aimed at improving the humanitarian, economic and health situation, ending the war and concluding a political settlement which ensures representation for all of Yemen's political components."

The Supreme Political Council president's mandate was extended for two more presidential terms, [according](#) to the Sana'a-based Saba News. Saleh Al-Sammad and Vice President Dr. Qasem Labouza, whose term was also extended, took office in August 2016. The politicians are two of the ten representatives of the Houthis and General People's Congress (GPC) that jointly govern the SPC. According to the body's [founding document](#), the leadership is cyclical between the two parties, and therefore the GPC, led by former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, will decide the next president while the vice president will belong to the Houthis. Later in July Ali Abdullah Saleh and Saleh Al-Sammad together [visited](#) a gathering of hundreds of fighters are urged them to continue the fight against the "aggression."

Nayef Al-Qaisi was removed as governor of Al-Baydha by Hadi on July 23, the fifth governor the president has fired in less than three months. In his place, Hadi [appointed](#) Saleh Ahmed Ali Al-Rassas. Al-Qaisi was originally made governor of Al-Baydha by Hadi in 2015, and he became the official leader of the popular resistance in the governorate, organizing funds and coordinating amongst the government, coalition, and resistance forces. Both the [US Treasury](#) and the [UN Security Council](#) consider Al-Qaisi to be a senior AQAP figure. Though not necessarily related, on July 25 Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt designated three charities and three individuals in Yemen as supporters of AQAP. An associate of Al-Qaisi, Abdul Wahab Al-Homayqani, was similarly designated an AQAP supporter by the four Gulf states in June.

Military and Security Developments

UAE-led forces captured Khaled Bin Walid camp, one of the country's largest military bases, on July 26. The Coalition/Hadi-aligned Yemeni Armed Forces posted a [video](#) from inside. The camp spans around a dozen square kilometers in Mouza district of Taiz, bordering Mocha district, and it is situated near a crucial intersection that links Mocha port 40 km west on the coast with Taiz city to the east and Hodeidah to the north. Retaking the camp is therefore a crucial step in cutting off Houthi/Saleh forces in Taiz from supplies and reinforcements coming from Hodeidah. Coalition/Hadi-aligned troops first entered the western gate of Khaled Bin Walid camp more than four months prior, on April 12, and fierce clashes had continued since then. Leading up to the final push to retake the camp, in mid-July the coalition/Hadi forces [captured](#) a part of the Taiz-Hodeidah road, which is similarly vital to blocking Houthi/Saleh reinforcements to the outskirts of Taiz city and paving a way forward for Operation Golden Storm.

High casualties were recorded throughout July in the western battle in Taiz, including in a coalition airstrike on July 18 in Mouza district. The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) [recorded](#) at least 18 civilians were killed, including ten children and two women, when an airstrike hit a makeshift straw house located about 8 km from Khalid Bin Walid

camp. The civilians had recently fled the fighting in Mocha district, and were recorded by the UN as internally displaced persons (IDPs). After the camp was retaken, fighting raged on nearby in eastern Mocha district, with many killed on both sides. The AFP [reported](#) a Houthi missile struck inside the camp on July 27, killing 20 Yemeni soldiers.

The Houthi/Saleh alliance claimed it struck a Saudi oil refinery in Yanbu with a long-range ballistic missile on July 22. The Sana'a-based state-run Saba news [reported](#) the missile, which the group calls a Burkan H-2, hit the refinery. It also released this [video](#), which allegedly shows the launch. Yanbu is around 900 to 1,000 km from Houthi/Saleh-held territory, which would make this the longest-range attack into Saudi territory to date. Without addressing the Houthi/Saleh claims, Saudi authorities [said](#) that at 9:22 pm – around the same time as the alleged attack – hot weather caused a fire at the Saudi Aramco Mobile Refinery in Yanbu, and that operations were not disrupted. Yanbu is one of the most important oil infrastructure areas in all of Saudi Arabia, and a market [assessment](#) indicates the Saudi version of events was widely believed in the oil industry, explaining that prices were not affected and the incident went largely ignored. However, two anonymous US defense officials later [told](#) CNN a missile was indeed fired from Sa'ada governorate, and “flew some 930 kilometers before landing near the western coast of Saudi Arabia.” While CNN said the target was the oil facility in Yanbu, it does not state whether it was successfully hit.

The Houthi/Saleh targeted King Fahd airbase in Saudi Arabia on July 27. According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), a ballistic missile was intercepted over Al-Wasliya area in the province of Al-Taif, which lies inside Mecca region. The SPA [statement](#) called the attack a “desperate attempt to disrupt Hajj season,” and said the interception took place 69km away from the holy city of Mecca without causing any harm. The Houthi/Saleh-run Saba News [reported](#) multiple medium-range Burkan 1 ballistic missiles targeted King Fahd airbase in Al-Taif, and a source in the Missile Forces claimed they hit the base, causing significant losses. Following the missile attack, the coalition heavily bombed Sana'a, including the civilian airport, a security official [told](#) Xinhua.

Analysis: The ballistic missile campaign against Saudi Arabia

More than 50 ballistic missiles have been fired into Saudi Arabia since the coalition intervention. If the Yanbu incident was a Houthi/Saleh attack then five of Saudi Arabia's 13 regions – Jizan, Asir, Najran, Mecca, and Madinah – were targeted by artillery and/or ballistic missiles in the month of July. This brief analysis examines some of the misinformation surrounding the missile program and discusses its wider political and humanitarian implications.

1. No ballistic missiles have been fired at the city of Mecca. [Regional](#) and [international](#) coverage of the July 27 strike described the missile as travelling “toward the Muslim holy city of Mecca,” and Newsweek ran the flashy [headline](#) “Mecca Missile Attack: Saudi Arabia Accuses Yemen’s Iran-Backed Rebels of Targeting Muslim Pilgrims.” However, following the attack the Saudi Press Agency’s [Arabic statement](#) clearly states the missile was heading in the direction of Mecca “region,” while the corresponding English statement does not differentiate between the region and city. Given that the July 27 interception point announced by Saudi Arabia, Al-Taif, matches the stated target, King Fahd airbase, and considering that Al-Taif does not lie on a possible ballistic missile trajectory between Mecca city and Houthi/Saleh-held territory, there is no indication Mecca city was fired upon. At least two other missile attacks have come in similar proximity to the city of Mecca: on October 9 a ballistic missile targeted the same King Fahd airbase in Mecca region, prompting similar headlines, and on October 27 a missile was fired toward King Abdulaziz Airport in Jeddah city, which is also in Mecca region. Both of these targets are, like the July 27 interception point, less than 70km from Mecca city and over 500km from the Yemeni border.

2. The Houthi/Saleh alliance is making a concerted effort to expand its missile program, and at the least maintain the advances it demonstrated in October. While the cross-border strikes have clear propaganda value, especially because the group's exaggerated claims are rarely discredited by independent media, the development of its missile program indicates a greater strategic goal is at play. The targeting of military bases and economic arteries in Saudi Arabia places pressure on the Kingdom to secure its border by pushing through a peace deal, and forces the coalition to devote resources to locating mobile missile launchers and setting up defensive mechanisms across Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Parallels can be drawn to the First Gulf War when Saddam Hussein, similarly outmatched by a powerful coalition, launched dozens of modified Soviet scud missiles into Saudi Arabia. Saddam was a friend and mentor of sorts to Ali Abdullah Saleh, who emulated him and for a time garnered the nickname “little Saddam.” The notoriously inaccurate scuds were employed first and foremost for outsized psychological effect – to cause fear and provoke a response – but they also had important military value. On one [occasion](#) a single missile killed 27 American troops and injured 98 at a military base in Saudi Arabia, and defensive measures to locate and destroy the mobile missile launchers drained considerable resources from the US, such that Central Command forces [diverted](#) 40 percent of all sorties to locating missile infrastructure in the early days of Operation Desert Storm.

Using mobile missile launchers, Yemen's Missile Forces are targeting several of the same locations with modified old scuds. For example, King Khaled airbase, targeted by Saddam's forces 25 years ago, was allegedly hit by the Houthi/Saleh alliance in 2015. The

Houthis claimed the attack killed Mohammed Al-Shaalan, then commander of the Royal Saudi Air Force, [although](#) the Saudis said he died of a heart attack while on a business trip abroad. The missile program has been far more successful within Yemeni territory, where the majority of missiles have been launched. In April, then coalition spokesman Ahmed Asiri [said](#) 48 ballistic missiles had been launched across the border, while 90 were fired at targets inside Yemen. On September 4, 2015, the Houthi/Saleh alliance [killed](#) 45 Emiratis with a missile fired on a base in Marib – the single highest casualty count since the UAE was formed – in addition to at least 38 other troops. In February 2017, a ballistic missile strike in Mocha district of Taiz [killed](#) Major General Ahmed Al-Yafai, who was the deputy chief of staff in Hadi's army and the commander of Operation Golden Spear. Several missiles have been launched farther than it is believed the pre-war stockpile would allow for, and the group began using kamikaze drones in an attempt to destroy radar sets crucial to the coalition's surface-to-air missile systems. This had led to accusations the Missile Forces are receiving foreign support, especially from Iran.

3. The ballistic missile program has become intertwined with the humanitarian situation. On the international stage and in press statements by the coalition and Hadi government, little focus has been placed on the legal aspect of alleged violations to the UNSC arms embargo, and instead opponents of the Houthi/Saleh alliance are focusing on the location of alleged weapons shipments. While little evidence has been made public of large-scale Iranian weapons transfers to the Houthis, many believe it is occurring. For example, in mid-July the US State Department [said](#) Iran "continues to provide the Houthi rebels in Yemen with advanced weaponry that threatens freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, has been used to attack Saudi Arabia, and is prolonging the Yemen conflict." Leading up to and during Operation Golden Spear in early 2017 the port of Mocha was said to be a major source of Houthi/Saleh weapons transfers. In recent months, attention has turned to Hodeidah port. In March, for example, the coalition [said](#) "the ongoing missile attacks on Saudi cities provide clear evidence of the arms smuggling that continues to take place in Yemen, notably through the port of Hodeida." Following the July 27 attack the coalition hardened its stance, [saying](#) it "confirmed that the non-stop trafficking of missiles into the Yemeni territories comes from the lack of control and monitoring system at Hodeida port, as well as the misuse of permits granted by the alliance to relief and goods shipments."

Reports by the EU-funded [Conflict and Armament Research](#) (CAR) indicate Iran is likely to be supplying some weapons and equipment, possibly overland through Oman. CAR has not, however, found evidence of ballistic missile transfers or a link to Hodeidah port. The UN Panel of Experts [Final Report 2017](#) states that anti-tank guided missiles are covertly transferred to the Houthi/Saleh over land through Oman, although "it is unlikely that the network using these routes could covertly transfer any significant quantities of larger-calibre weapon systems, such as short-range ballistic missiles, into Yemen at the current time." The report goes on to say it "has not seen sufficient evidence to confirm any direct large-scale supply of arms from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran," and that for small-scale trafficking to Houthi/Saleh-held ports on the west coast "the Panel has seen no evidence of any maritime seizures to date on this route, which strongly suggests that it is not being actively exploited." Of the four confirmed maritime seizures through 2015 and 2016, none involved ballistic missile parts and all were destined for Somalia. The Panel said there were contradicting Saudi media reports that the coalition intercepted or bombed one arms shipment, but the authorities never responded to queries. In July, the coalition [claimed](#) it bombed another weapons shipment near Salif port in Hodeidah, but no evidence was made public.

Arms sales to Saudi Arabia can continue, the British high court ruled on July 10. The court determined the British government is “rationally entitled” to continue granting licenses because it can conclude the coalition has not been deliberately targeting civilians, and that it has made improvements to its targeting practices. The judges found, [according](#) to the Guardian, the arguments brought forth by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) “represent a substantial body of evidence suggesting that the coalition has committed serious breaches of international humanitarian law in the course of its engagement in the Yemen conflict.” However, the judges said the evidence presented in the public portion of the hearing “is only part of the picture,” and the British government has “considerable insight into the military systems, processes and procedures of Saudi Arabia adopted in Yemen.”

Suspected AQAP militants launched several attacks in Shabwa throughout July. On July 16 militants [attacked](#) an army checkpoint in northeast Shabwa, killing five soldiers and wounding three before fleeing the scene. The next day, a suicide car bomber [killed](#) eight soldiers at the main gate of an Elite Forces military base in Ain Bamaabad area of Rudhum district, near the port of Belhaf. The ongoing attacks near or directly targeting oil and gas infrastructure is especially troubling in Shabwa because Belhaf on the coast hosts Yemen’s only liquefied natural gas (LNG) export plant and near to it is one of the country’s few oil tanker terminals. The Petroleum Economist magazine [said](#) in late July it is expected gas will not flow from the field in Marib to the plant in Belhaf until at least 2020.

Houthi/Saleh forces conducted a naval attack on the port of Mocha on July 29. [According](#) to the coalition, the port was hit by a “booby-trapped boat full of explosives,” which collided with a naval pier nearby a group of ships, causing no casualties. Yemen’s information minister [called](#) it an attempt to prevent Mocha from being an alternative to Hodeidah port. In contrast, Houthi/Saleh media [reported](#) their navy targeted an Emirati frigate near the coast of Mocha with a guided missile, adding that the ship was coming from the port of Assab in Eritrea, and carrying military equipment.

Several Yemen-related amendments were included in H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the fiscal year 2018, which the US House of Representatives passed on July 14. The [bill](#) specifies the Defense Department’s budget and restrictions on the provision of funds, and it still must go through the Senate and the White House to become law. The limitations placed on US military action in Yemen, described below, were [welcomed](#) by the Sana’a-based parliament of Yemen, which “called on the House to implement its resolution and end US military support to the coalition air campaign against the Yemeni people.” The following passed the House:

- An [amendment](#) for the secretaries of defense and state to submit a joint report every 180 days on the military action of Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners in Yemen, and report on the roles played by US military personnel in coalition operations in Yemen, among other things.
- An [amendment](#) stating “none of the funds authorized to be appropriated by the Act are authorized to be made available to deploy members of the Armed Forces to participate in the ongoing civil war in Yemen.” This effectively bans the use of Defense Department funds for the purpose of deploying US military personnel to partake in the conflict, but does not bar their deployment using other sources of funding.
- An [amendment](#) prohibiting the use of funds for military operations in Yemen outside the scope of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists (AUMF). This effectively bars the use of defense bill funds for US military operations in Yemen that are not related to terrorism.

The following failed to pass the Rules Committee, and was thus not voted on by the House:

- An [amendment](#) to reduce or place limits on the US military’s refueling of coalition aircraft, and to require regular and detailed reporting to Congress. Relatedly, the Intercept [wrote](#) that US refueling, measured by pounds of fuel, increased following the October 2016 funeral hall airstrikes and so far in 2017 is nearly a third more than 2015 and 2016, on average. According to Pentagon spokesman Adrian Rankine-Galloway, the UAE Air Force is the main recipient of US refueling.

Recommending Readings:

- [Migration Between the Horn of Africa and Yemen: A Study of Puntland, Djibouti and Yemen](#), by the EU-funded Research and Evidence Facility (REF), provides an extensive look at the driving forces behind migration from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, and its impact on local communities and the migrants themselves.
- For the Middle East Eye, Yemeni activist Baraa Shiban [argues](#) that rather than elite-level talks or more articles about the humanitarian crisis, what Yemen needs most is greater understanding of and emphasis on local dynamics.
- [Yemen and the Business of War](#), an article by Peter Salisbury for Chatham House, explores the question: with the conflict largely static and militia leaders in control of valuable trade routes and other means of income, why stop the war?
- PBS Frontline goes [Inside Yemen](#) in this ten minute documentary filmed in Sana'a and focused primarily on the humanitarian crisis.
- In an article for Just Security, a former American ambassador to Yemen and the previous White House senior director for North Africa and Yemen co-write about [The View from Riyadh](#), making three recommendations: re-energize the UN mediation process, increase pressure on the Houthis, and clarify the parameters of a peace deal.
- The Yemeni Embassy in Washington released a report titled [Yemen Efforts in the Fight Against Terrorism](#), putting forth the Hadi government's stance on past counter-terrorism measures and its strategic vision moving forward.
- [Qatar's Dispute with Neighbors Reverberates in Yemen](#), explains this short article by the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW).

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