

Yemen



Let's Practice!



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“The first-hour Houthi warriors had consisted **of supporters, relatives, friends, and students of Husayn al-Huthi**: most hailed from the Sa’dah region, especially from the Khawlan tribe, though his supporters also numbered people from other regions and governorates with Zaydi populations, including Hajjah, Dhamar, Sana’a, ‘Amran and al-Jawf. The second, growing group of Houthi supporters consisted of people who did not join the movement for primarily ideological or sectarian reasons. Many had been drawn into the conflict **after members of their family or tribe had been killed by bombings and other aggression by the armed forces**. Others had lost their homes or farms. By 2006, thousands of men were fighting for the Houthis, not all of them sharing the Houthi ideology. They simply ‘rode the wave’ to fight for their tribe, or against their enemies and rivals, the government, or a hated shaykh. Thus, **many Houthi fighters had no ‘real’ loyalty to the movement or its leaders; they switched sides based on interests that were direct, immediate and private.**”

Tribes and Politics in Yemen: A History of the Houthi Conflict

By Marieke Brandt

Saudi Arabia

Southern Transitional Council ●

*Supported by Arab Coalition

Houthi militia (Ansar Allah)

AQAP (al-Qaeda) & tribal allies

Military Situation Map of Yemen - 26 April 2021

Oman

Arabian Sea

Qalansiyah

Socotra Island

Haddob

Abdulkuri Island

Somalia

Balhaf

alla

al-Shihr

Aden

Gulf of Aden

Eritrea


Ethiopia

Djibouti

Red Sea

Hudaydah

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Overview in Yemen

- **August 2014:** Following two weeks of anti-government protests, President Hadi dissolves his cabinet and overturns a controversial rise in fuel prices.
- **September-October 2014:** Houthis take control over most of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and next month seize port city of Hodeida.
- **March 2015:** IS claims its first major attacks in Yemen, setting off two suicide bombs at Shia mosques in Sanaa. Houthis start an offensive against government forces, advancing toward southern Yemen. President Hadi flees Aden and takes refuge in Saudi Arabia. Houthis seize parts of Taiz.
- **March 2015: Operation Decisive Storm** initiated by a Saudi-led coalition of Arab states in support of the ousted president. The coalition launches air strikes against Houthi targets, deploys small ground forces, and imposes a naval blockade.
- **April 2015: Operation Restoring Hope**, yet Saudi-led coalition continues to bomb Houthi positions and US increases its arms sales for the Saudi campaign in Yemen.

Overview in Yemen

- **May 2015** – Ali Abdullah Saleh and Yemeni forces loyal to him announce a formal alliance with the Houthis. The Saudis and Houthis agree to a five-day “humanitarian ceasefire.”
- **August 2015** – After months of fighting with Sunni tribesmen and AQAP militants, the Houthis take control of the entire Shabwah governorate.
- **September 2015** – Saudi-backed government forces and those loyal to Hadi recapture the port city of Aden from Houthi forces.
- **October 2016-May 2017** – Both sides of the conflict allegedly break ceasefires.
- **May-November 2017** – Humanitarian agencies decry the Yemen crisis as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in the world. Thousands of civilians dead and wounded, an outbreak of cholera, and a potential famine that would leave thousands on the brink of starvation.
- **November 2017** – Saudi Arabia intercepts a missile fired toward its airport in Riyadh and blames the Houthis, Iran, and Lebanon’s Hezbollah for escalating the war.
- **December 2017** – After Saleh had reversed course and sided with the Saudi-led coalition, fierce fighting in Sanaa between the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh leaves the former president dead. The Houthis control much of northern Yemen but face stiff opposition from the Saudi-led coalition. President Hadi—whose loyalists control much of south Yemen—has called for a popular uprising against Houthi rule in the north.

Recent Developments in Yemen

- **January 2018:** Southern Transitional Council (STC), the United Arab Emirates-backed separatist movement, seizes control of Aden, Yemen's main southern city and government headquarters.
- **March-May 2018:** Fighting escalates along Yemen's western coast and dozens are killed in Saudi air strikes and security raids.
- **2018:** International opposition to Saudi-led coalition due to air raids striking civilians (wedding and school bus).
- **December 2018:** Yemeni government and Houthis sign Stockholm Agreement, includes cease-fire is set to take effect on December 18. Overall, Stockholm Agreement fails.
- **2019:** Fighting continues. Houthis launch a drone attack on Al-Anad Air Base north of Aden, injuring dozens and killing the head of Yemeni intelligence. Houthis step up efforts to attack Saudi territory, including launching missiles at oil installations and airports. By August, STC effectively assumes control of the southern governorates of Aden, Abyan, and Shabwa. Clashes between Yemeni govt and Saudi and UAE backed forces.
- **January-February 2020:** U.S. drone strike kills al-Qaida leader Qassim al-Rimi in Marib province. Fighting between Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis picks up.
- **March 2020** – Houthi forces capture the strategic city of al-Hazm, capital of al-Jawf province and Saudi forces carry out a retaliatory air strike on Sanaa.

Recent Developments in Yemen

- **April-May 2020:** In April, Saudi Arabia initiates a unilateral two-week cease-fire to mitigate the risks of the new coronavirus pandemic. Despite the cease-fire, Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition are accused of carrying out attacks. In the south, STC once again demands self-rule, breaking its agreement with the national government.
- **June-July 2020:** In June, STC deposes the recognized government in Socotra. The following month, STC renounced its claim to self-rule and will return to the previously agreed-upon power-sharing structure.
- **October 2020:** Yemen's warring sides carry out the conflict's largest prisoner swap.
- **December 2020:** as new govt officials arrive in Aden, attack on airport kills at least two dozen people. Houthis are viewed as responsible for attack.
- **January 19, 2021:** Trump Administration designates Houthis as Tier 1 foreign terrorist organization.
- **February 16, 2021:** President Joe Biden announces changes to US policy toward Yemen, including **revoking Houthi FTO designation**, declaring an end to US support for the Saudi-led coalition's offensive operations in the conflict, supporting the UN-led peace process.

Current Overview in Yemen

- Landmines believed to be planted by Houthis have killed 8,000 people in Yemen. The war has killed some 130,000 people and driven the Arab world's poorest country to the brink of famine.
- **April 2021:** Fighting for Ma'rib, the last stronghold for Yemeni govt in the north, continues between Houthis and Yemeni govt. Houthis have intensified drone and missile strikes on densely populated Mar'rib as their ground forces press ahead toward the oil-rich city.

Questions?



Contact Us: RAIO Research Unit

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Welcome

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