

Hi –

In an effort to keep you updated on the situation in Yemen, I wanted to share with you two items:

- Summary of Houthi Violations of International Law in Yemen - This document provides an overview of Houthi violations as described in the recent UN Panel of Experts on Yemen Report.
- Statement by Mark Lowcock, the Under- Secretary-General of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs, on the humanitarian situation on Yemen.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding Yemen and Iran's destabilizing activities in the region.

Thanks.

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Houthi Violations of International Law in Yemen

February 22, 2018

Overview

A 26 January 2018 letter from the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council describes in great detail the many offenses committed by the Houthi forces in the ongoing conflict in Yemen. These offenses include indiscriminate use of missiles on civilian populations, the recruitment of child soldiers and extrajudicial executions, along with many other gross violations of international humanitarian law.

All of the information presented in this briefing was compiled from the UN Panel's letter* to the Security Council.

Prolongation of Hostilities

According to the UN Panel, the Houthi rebels have actively impeded the cessation of hostilities and the resumption of political process. The Panel agrees that "the longer [the Houthis] remain in control, the more entrenched they will become." A Houthi-controlled Yemen poses a grave threat to the stability of both Yemen and the Gulf region.

- On 25 May 2017, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, was attacked by the Houthis in Sana'a.
- "The Houthis have effectively banned the Special Envoy by refusing to accept any subsequent proposals from him."
- The Houthis are unwilling to negotiate, believing that they can win the war if they "survive and outlast the Saudi Arabia-led coalition."
- Houthi leadership is largely insulated from attacks, and from shortages of food, medicine, fuel and water. Meanwhile they allow Yemeni civilians in their territory to suffer.

The city of Ta'izz has been the focus of the most sustained fighting over the past year. Houthi forces continue to besiege the city.

The UN Panel believes that the longer the current conflict in Yemen lasts, the more recruits Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) will attract.

Obstruction of Maritime Aid Delivery

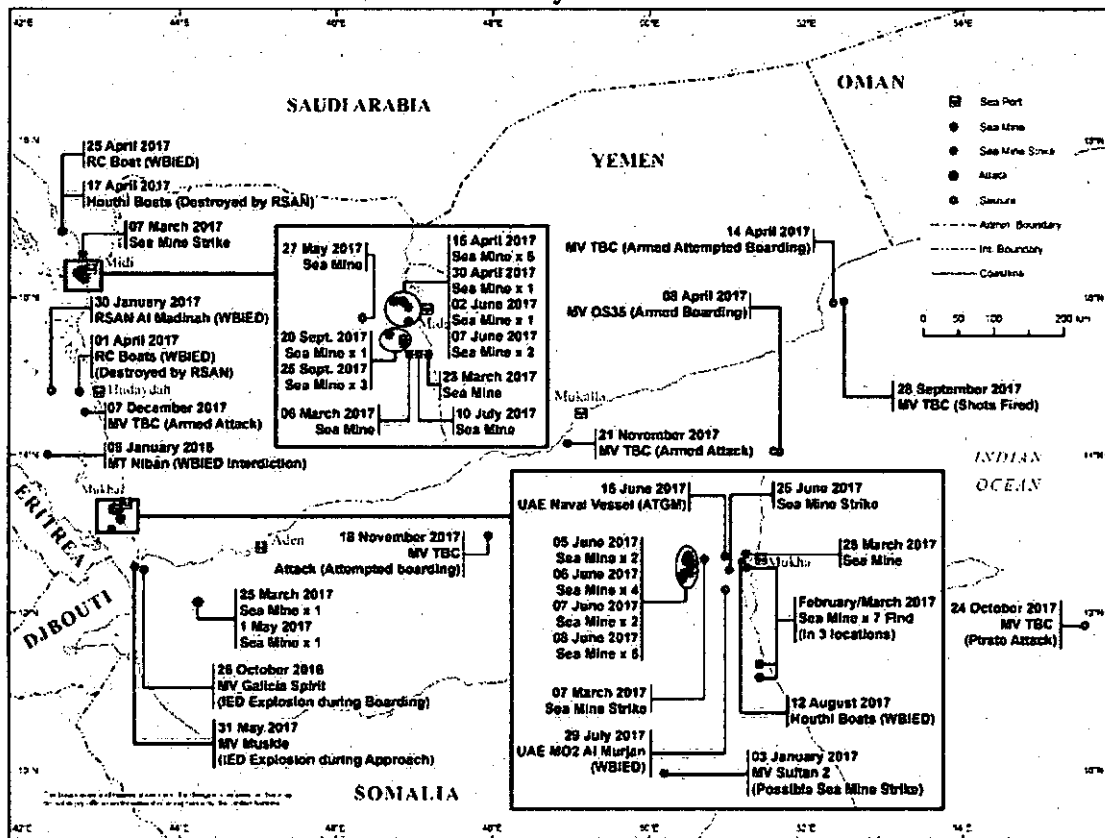
Houthi attacks along the strategic sea lines of communication have jeopardized the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Yemen by sea, violating international law. These attacks include:

- Missile or explosive attacks against Saudi Arabia-led coalition naval vessels to Red Sea ports.
- An attempted attack against the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker MV *Muskie*.
- The use of naval and improvised sea mines.

The Houthis' use of missiles and explosives on vessels approaching the Red Sea ports coupled with their deliberate evasion of discussion with the UN have dramatically disrupted maritime humanitarian aid delivery.

*All figures were taken from the publicly available [letter](#) dated 26 January 2018 from the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen to the President of the Security Council.

Figure I:
Maritime Security Incidents in 2017



Map No. 4572 1:1 UNITED NATIONS January 2018 Geospatial Information Section, Department of Field Support Data and location source: Panel of Experts for Yemen, United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee

Violations of International Arms Embargo

The UN Panel identified strong evidence of the supply of arms-related material manufactured in, or emanating from, the Islamic Republic of Iran after the establishment of the targeted arms embargo on 14 April 2015. Evidence is particularly abundant in the area of short-range ballistic missile technology and unmanned aerial vehicles.

- The deployment of advanced ballistic missile technology by the Houthi forces demonstrates a vulnerability in the current inspection and enforcement measures to shipments of non-explosive arms and arms-related material.
- Iranian manufactured anti-tank guided missiles were seized in 2016 and 2017.

Prior to 2015, the Yemeni Armed Forces was not in possession of the Borkan-2H missile currently being used by the Houthi forces. The design features of this missile are consistent with the Iranian designed Qiam-1 Missile.

- The Borkan-2H is an advanced derivative of the Iranian Qiam-1 specially designed with weight saving measures to achieve a range of 1000+km.

The Houthis continue to make use of small and medium-sized unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, reconnaissance and, in the case of medium-sized UAVs, explosive attacks.

- The Houthis employ Qasef-1 UAVs, capable of delivering a 30-45kg warhead up to 150km.

- Their Qasef-1 UAVs are identical to the Ababil-T, manufactured by the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industries.
- The UN Panel concluded that the material necessary to assemble the Qasef-1 UAVs emanated from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Figure II
Houthi image of a UAV Qasef-1

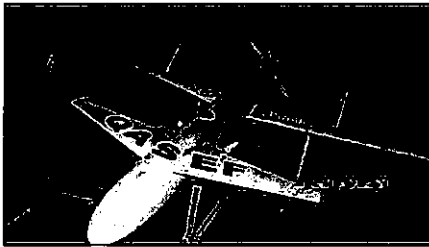


Figure III
Iranian Ababil-T UAV

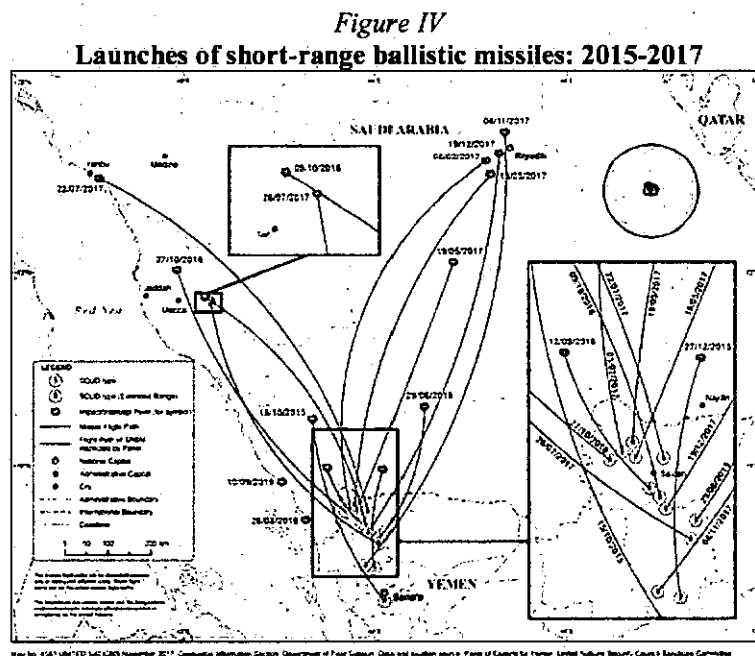


The UN Panel found that the Islamic Republic of Iran was in non-compliance with UN resolution 2216(2017) by failing to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of military related equipment to the Houthi forces.

Indiscriminate Use of Short-range Ballistic Missiles on Civilian Populations

The Houthis continue to demonstrate mobile short-range ballistic missile or free flight rocket capability to strike at Saudi Arabia, often targeting the Saudi Arabian civilian population. In some cases, it was found that the Houthis used Iranian-supplied missiles to reach targets in Riyadh.

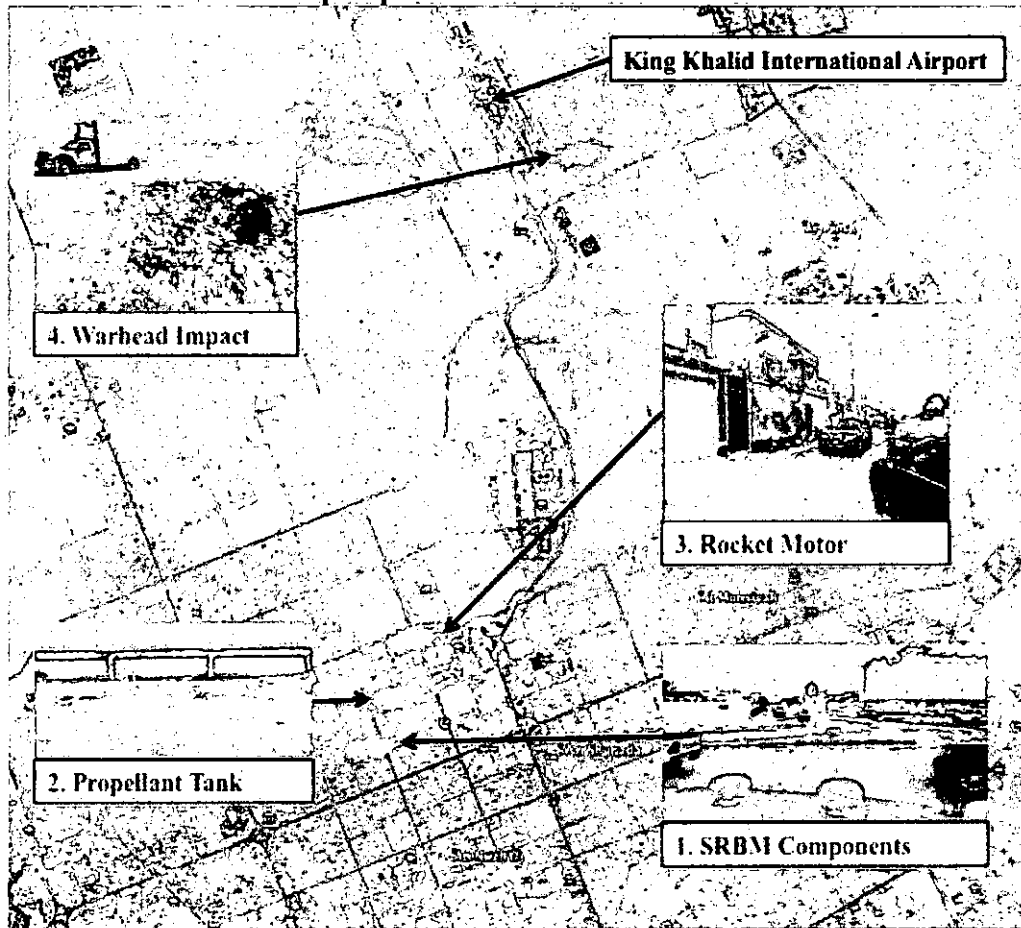
The use of ballistic missiles against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia is a violation of international humanitarian law.



The UN Panel investigated multiple confirmed attacks by short-range ballistic missiles with an extended range “substantially beyond that normally expected of the missiles known to be in the inventory of the Houthi-Saleh alliance.”

It was concluded that the missile strike targeting King Khalid International Airport violated international humanitarian law in that it targeted a civilian airport. This constitutes a threat to peace, security and stability in Yemen.

Figure V
Impact points of final ER-SRBM track

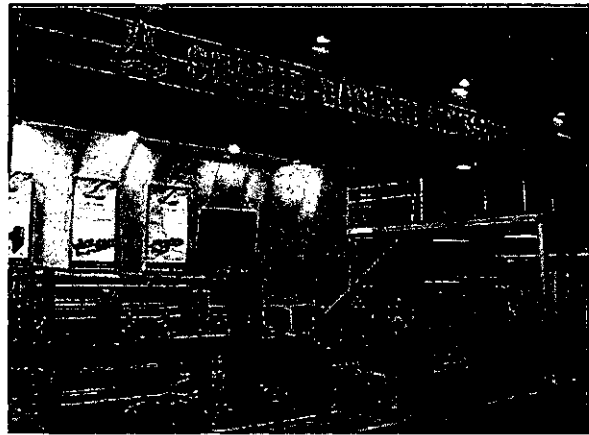


- The Panel deems it possible that foreign missile specialists may be providing technical advice in Yemen.
- The Houthi forces “almost certainly do not have the design or engineering capability” to manufacture a new type of short-range ballistic missile.
- The Panel’s investigation concluded that several missiles fired by the Houthis are consistent with those of the Iranian designed and manufactured Qiam-1 missile.
- “This means that they were almost certainly produced by the same manufacturer,” and emanated from Iran.

Figure VI
Enhanced image of Shahid Bagheri Industries logo on a recovered missile



Figure VII
Shahid Bagheri Industries logo on a trade stand



The Panel has also discovered that many weapon components and materials in Houthi possession were manufactured in Iran, or were supplied to Iran for shipment to Yemen via foreign manufacturers.

Indiscriminate Deployment of Waterborne Improvised Explosive Devices

Houthi forces have *successfully* deployed waterborne improvised explosive devices on at least two occasions: a.) an attack against a Royal Saudi Arabian Navy frigate; and b.) in the port of Mukha.

Houthi forces have also employed Iranian manufactured “bottom” sea mines as well as dozens of improvised sea mines, disrupting maritime aid delivery and posing a grave threat to the sea lines of communication in the Red Sea.

Figure VIII
Sea mine recovered from Mukha (2017)

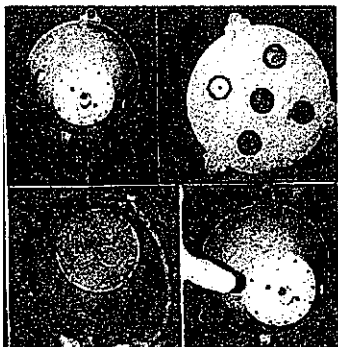


Figure IX
Sea mine at Iranian Arms fair (2015)



The last time sea mines were sown in the Red Sea was in 1984, resulting in 19 vessels being struck over a period of months.

- The duration of the threat posed by Houthi mines is estimated to be between 6 to 10 years.
- Recovered mines from Thwaq Island are evidence that some mines have already become drifting sea mines.

Figure X
Seasonal sea mine drift in Red Sea

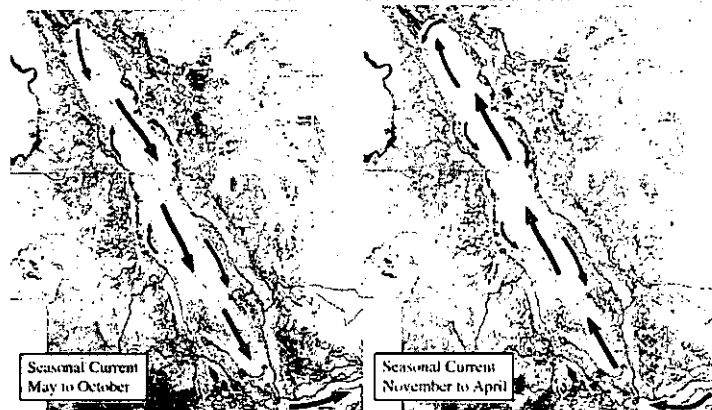
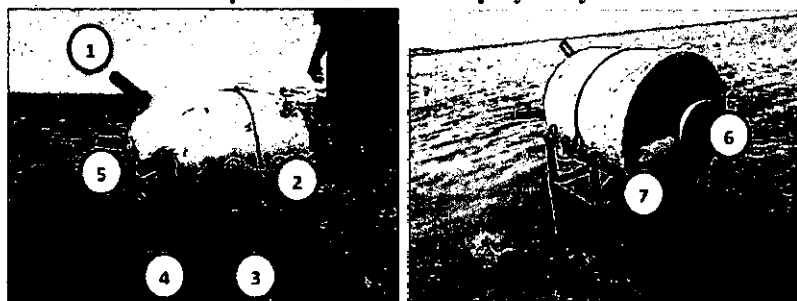


Figure XI
The "Midi" improvised sea mine deployed by Houthi forces



Abuse of State Economic Resources

The Houthis directly control most of the national economy in their territories through ministers and managers loyal to them.

- The Houthi forces control a minimum of \$1.62 billion in State assets.
- Telecommunications companies and tobacco sales are the main sources of revenue for the Houthis in Sana'a.
- The Houthis have implemented illegal mechanisms for the collection of additional customs duties on commodities that pass through their territory.

- The Houthi ministry of finance has established new permanent customs posts at Amran and Dhamar checkpoints to exploit additional road traffic.

The Houthis also control the oil sector, mainly through the use of black market distributors under their control. As of 30 July 2017, the UN Panel estimated the potential oil revenue for the Houthis between \$1 billion and \$1.3 billion.

- All current active oil importers are Houthi affiliated

The Houthis have tried to compensate for a lack of liquid assets through various corrupt programs:

- A corrupt food voucher system operated by a Houthi affiliated individual.
- An attempt to use counterfeit promissory notes.
- Illegal cross-border trafficking of money and gold.

Moreover, on 23 December 2017, the Houthi Deputy Minister of Interior ordered the Governor of the Central Bank to enforce the “provisional seizure of all bank accounts owned by traitors,” in a list comprised of 1,223 names.

Arbitrary Arrests, Extrajudicial Executions and Deprivation of Liberty

General

The UN Panel investigated 16 cases of arbitrary arrest and deprivation of liberty and other violations of international humanitarian law and human rights norms committed by the Houthi forces. These case studies suggest that the Houthis regularly detain, torture (including children) and deprive individuals of their liberty. In some cases, this has led to the death of Houthi prisoners.

- Violations have been committed by officials of the Sana'a-based political security organization, the Sana'a-based national security bureau and other Houthi authorities.
- Motlaq Amer al-Marrani (also known as Abu Emad), deputy head of the Houthi national security bureau, was involved in *all* violations investigated by the Panel.

One reason for the continued detention of individuals is the inability of the Houthi leaders to agree on a local prisoner exchange. Additionally, some Houthis have profited from the illegal detention of individuals through demands for ransom or prisoner exchange.

- Certain detainees have only been released after their families paid 1,000,000 rials (\$4,000).
- Any detention of civilians, solely as leverage for future prisoner exchange, is hostage taking, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

A significant deprivation of liberty took place on 2 December 2017 when 41 local journalists were arbitrarily detained.

Saleh Family

The Houthis have also captured several of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh's relatives. The UN Panel believes that the Houthis are holding them “as leverage” in case any of Saleh's family attempts to resurrect the Saleh network. Detained members of the Saleh family have been dispossessed of their assets by the Houthis.

The Houthis have also “executed key military commanders, arrested prominent members of the General People's Congress and intimidated others, forcibly dispersed protests, kidnapped the children of

prominent families tied to Saleh, destroyed the homes of Saleh supporters and instigated a media blackout by blocking social media sites and much of the internet.”

Indiscriminate use of Explosive Ordinance Against Civilian Populated Areas

In 2017, the UN Panel investigated 163 cases of the indiscriminate use of explosive ordinance (EO) against civilian-populated areas in Ta'izz, Ma'rib, Yemen and one case in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that are attributable to the Houthi forces.

The evidence gathered “strongly demonstrates” that Houthi forces engaged in the indiscriminate use of EO in densely populated civilian areas, violating the principles of international humanitarian law.

Figures XII & XIII

Example of damage to houses in Ta'izz caused by Houthi forces' indiscriminate use of EO



Houthi forces have recklessly used explosive ordinance in densely populated civilian areas such as the city of Ta'izz, resulting in the death and injury of hundreds of Yemeni civilians. The UN Panel concluded that the continued use of such weapons could not happen unless sanctioned as a policy by the high-level Houthi leadership, including Abdulmalik al-Houthi personally.

- One example is a 2 November 2017 mortar detonated in al-Onsowa, Ta'izz, killing five children and injuring two others.

The Panel considers the continued widespread civilian casualties, including children, by the indiscriminate use of EO a veritable threat to the peace, security and stability in Yemen.

Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict

Based on the analysis of the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen, the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict by the Houthi forces represents a large problem. In Houthi controlled areas, there are local networks of former and current fighters and Houthi loyalists who continue to recruit children.

These children are sent to the front lines and are often injured, maimed, or killed in the conflict.

- Recruiters are deployed to their own residential areas because they are known to the local population. This makes it easier for them to recruit child soldiers.

- Houthi forces recruit children by offering a monthly wage of approximately 15,000 to 20,000 rials (\$60 to \$80).

On 19 October 2017, Hassan Mohamed Zaid, the Houthi Minister for Youth and Sports, called for the closure of schools so students could be sent to the battlefronts as reinforcements. He tweeted:

"What if school study stops one year and all the youths and teachers go for military service?

Is not this going to feed the fronts with hundreds of thousands for decisive battle?

High school students used to be forced to stop for one year waiting for documents.

What is the difference then?"

Figure XIV

Original tweet by Minister of Youth and Sports



حسن زيد

October 19 at 11:17pm

...

ماذا لو توقفت الدراسة عام وتوجه الشباب كلهم ومعهم استاذهم
للتجنيد؟
الز نتمكن من رفد الجبهات بمئات الالاف ونحسم المعركة؟
لقد كان طلاب الثانوية يجبروا على ترك الدراسة عام كامل انتظار
للوئاق
فما هو الفرق ؟

This type of statement from a person in authority will be construed as implicit authority and encouragement for the continuing Houthi recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Minister of Youth and Sports compares the recruitment of young students to "waiting for documents," glossing over the obvious dangers of war, especially for children. The UN Panel declares this kind of incitement a threat to the peace, security and stability in Yemen.

The Panel emphasizes that the regular and widespread recruitment and use of children in conflict is, at minimum, a war crime.

Obstruction to the Distribution of Humanitarian Assistance

In 2017, the Panel found that the Houthis continued to obstruct the distribution of humanitarian assistance and prevented humanitarian access. These obstructions include:

- Arrests, detention, intimidation and torture of humanitarian staff
- Confiscation of necessary equipment
- Interference in the selection of beneficiaries, areas of operation and implementing partners
- Declaration of areas as military zones, making them inaccessible to humanitarians
- Extortion and demands for payment under threats of violence

- Obstruction of the delivery of cholera response material
- Aid diversion
- Delays or refusals that affect timely distribution
- Issues related to customs clearance
- Delays in clearing the importation of medicine from Sana'a International Airport

The Houthi forces use the general population of Yemen as a pawn when they militarize the distribution of aid. Motlaq Amer al-Marrani (also known as Abu Emad), the deputy head of the Sana'a-based national security bureau, was also responsible for the arbitrary arrest, detention and ill treatment of humanitarian workers and other authorities working on humanitarian assistance. He also abused his authority and influence over humanitarian access as leverage to generate personal profit.