



Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Yemen: Security and humanitarian situation

Version 1.0

November 2015

Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please [e-mail us](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Guidance

Updated 3 November 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of Claim

- 1.1.1. That the general humanitarian situation in Yemen is so severe as to make removal a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and/or
- 1.1.2. That the security situation in Yemen presents a real risk which threatens life or person such that removal would be in breach of Article 15(c) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 ('the Qualification Directive').

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Is the person's account a credible one?

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility see sections 4 and 5 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also ensure that each asylum application has been checked to establish if there has been a previous UK visa or other application for leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview: see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing: see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#).

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2.2 Does the person have a well-founded fear of persecution?

- 2.2.1 A state of civil instability and/or where law and order has broken down does not of itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Convention reason.
- 2.2.2 However, the fact that a person comes from a place where there is a state of civil instability and/or where law and order has broken down does not preclude a claim for asylum, if the person has a well-founded fear of persecution for a Convention reason.
- 2.2.3 Yemen is a politically and tribally split society, with divisions also falling along sectarian lines. There are many actors in the current conflict including al Houthi (Shia) rebels, the government (backed by the Saudi-led coalition), southern militias/separatist groups, and (Sunni) Jihadish groups, principally the Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula and Islamic State (IS). In assessing whether someone is at risk of serious harm, decision makers will need to take into account where an individual originates from and their political allegiance / ethnic / tribal origin and religious sect. See [Political situation](#) and [Protagonists](#)

2.2.4 Only where the person does not qualify under the Refugee Convention do decision makers need to go on to make an assessment of the need for humanitarian protection.

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2.3 Does the person fall to be excluded from a grant of protection?

2.3.1 Parties on all sides of the conflict have reportedly been responsible for severe human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including violations of the right to life, abduction, ill-treatment and attacks against humanitarian workers, journalists and media organisations as well as, potentially, the arbitrary denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival (see [UN Security Council Resolution 2216](#). [Security: Levels & Nature of Violence](#)).

2.3.2 Many of the anti-government combatants in Yemen are affiliated to Al Qaeda, Islamic State, and other terrorist organisations. These groups have been responsible for beheadings, suicide bombing and other atrocities.

2.3.3 Decision makers must consider if there are serious reasons for considering that a person was involved in or associated with such acts, or with the groups concerned and, if so, whether one or more of the exclusion clauses apply.

2.3.4 Where a person is excluded from protection under the Refugee Convention they are also excluded from Humanitarian Protection. However, if there is a real risk of a breach of Article 3 ECHR the person may be entitled to Discretionary Leave or Restricted Leave.

2.3.5 See the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.4 Is the general humanitarian situation in Yemen so severe as to make removal a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR?

2.4.1 Where a person would be at risk of serious harm on return due to direct or targeted actions by the parties to the conflict, it will invariably be because of a Refugee Convention defined reason.

2.5 Humanitarian situation

2.5.1 The humanitarian situation has deteriorated across the country following the escalation in the conflict in March 2015. On 1 July 2015, the UN declared a Level 3 (most severe) emergency response for Yemen. See [Humanitarian situation](#).

2.5.2 The UN reported that there has been extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure, with hospitals, schools, court houses, power generation facilities and communications institutions being partially or totally destroyed in the governorates of Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Al-Jawf, Al-Mahwit and Hajjah. They also estimate that 80% of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance – approximately 21.1 million people (out of a total population of 25 million) – which represents a 33% increase since late 2014.

- 2.5.3 UNICEF estimates (October 2015) that 537,000 children under age 5 are at risk of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) —a threefold increase from 160,000 in March. This means that one in eight children under age 5 is at risk of severe malnutrition. Almost 1.3 million children under age 5 are moderately malnourished compared with 690,000 children prior to the crisis. The country's alarming malnutrition levels are aggravated by the limited availability of, and lack of access to, food due to blocked or damaged delivery routes and restrictions on food and fuel imports. At the same time, livelihoods have been disrupted, unemployment has risen, fuel and water prices have surged and availability remains erratic.
- 2.5.4 The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that the national monthly average cost of a partial food basket in September 2015 was over 30 per cent more than the pre-crisis levels of September 2014. This price increase adds more pressure on the weakened purchasing power of average people already struggling with eroding coping mechanisms, such as relying on family and friends for support and eating less nutritious meals.
- 2.5.5 Access to health and nutrition services is increasingly difficult as facilities in at least 10 governorates have been damaged. Medical supplies are low, medical staff have fled to other areas in search of safety while others have left the country. UNICEF reports that 192 nutrition centres across the country had to close down due to fuel shortages and partners' lack of access to these areas. Deteriorating sanitation conditions exacerbate the nutrition situation, further exposing children to diseases, such as diarrhoea and malaria. See [Humanitarian situation](#)
- 2.5.6 Between March and October 2015, more than 2.3 million people were estimated to have been internally displaced. An estimated 20.4 million people require assistance to access safe drinking water and sanitation. Almost half the population are food-insecure – a 15.7% increase since the crisis began in late 2014. See [Humanitarian situation](#).
- 2.5.7 Throughout the country, people are struggling to access food, fuel and medicine with an estimated 8.6 million people in urgent need of medical care. Drastically reduced imports as a result of a land and marine blockade of the country and the closure of a number of airports have limited the availability of basic commodities. Lack of fuel, together with ongoing fighting and insecurity, has prevented available supplies from being distributed. It has also caused hospitals to close because of a lack of fuel for generators (and a lack of staff). See [Humanitarian situation](#).
- 2.5.8 The humanitarian situation remains serious throughout the country, including Aden, and in April 2015, the UNHCR called for all countries to suspend forcible returns of nationals and habitual residents of Yemen. However, since August 2015 aid has begun to get through, with notable increases in food, fuel and building materials to cities in the south including Aden and Hudaydah. Control of the city of Aden has been taken back from Houthi militias by coalition forces and is now in the hands of the government. However the humanitarian situation remains severe for the majority of the population. ([see Humanitarian access](#)).

- 2.5.9 Humanitarian organizations have scaled up life-saving and urgent humanitarian response to conflict-affected people, despite an extremely challenging operating environment. Between March and September, aid agencies reached 5.5 million people with one-time emergency food or cash/voucher assistance. A further 116,000 people received emergency agricultural and livestock kits. In the same reporting period, over 3.7 million Yemenis have been provided with drinking water through direct distribution or the provision of fuel to pumping stations. More than 366,000 people received hygiene kits and benefited from hygiene-promotion sessions, while 334,000 people can now access newly constructed sanitation facilities in conflict affected areas. Education partners reached 4,400 conflict-affected schoolchildren with psychosocial support and supported the rehabilitation of 40 schools. The Protection Cluster supported 22,000 survivors with psychosocial and legal assistance, and it continues to track internal displacement within Yemen.
- 2.5.10 Medicine Without Frontiers (MSF) are currently operating an emergency surgical hospital in the north of Aden, and an Advanced Emergency Post in the south of the city. MSF and other aid agencies are also working in a number of other cities within Yemen.
- 2.5.11 While access to southern areas of Yemen has improved, many parts of the country, particularly the centre and north, remain difficult to access by humanitarian agencies because of the ongoing insecurity and restrictions in freedom of movement (see [Humanitarian Access](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.5.12 Decision makers must refer to the latest information about the humanitarian situation in the place concerned (see Country Information and Annex A for maps and current resources).
- 2.5.13 The humanitarian situation in Aden (and some areas in southern Yemen) while severe does not in general breach Article 3 of the ECHR. However conditions in some areas in the centre and north of the country, including Sana'a, are likely to breach Article 3 in many cases. Decision makers should refer to the latest available country information, taking into account the person's ability to cater for his or her most basic needs, his or her vulnerability to ill-treatment, his or her ability to access support networks and the prospect of his/her situation improving within a reasonable time-frame.
- 2.5.14 For further guidance see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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- 2.6 Is there indiscriminate violence in Yemen which is at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that the person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person?

Security situation

- 2.6.1 Over the course of 2014 the security situation deteriorated across the country with clashes between different parties including the government, Houthi rebels, Sunni Islamist groups, southern secessionist groups, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and tribal militias.
- 2.6.2 The erosion of a central authority and the fragmentation of the army allowed militant groups to increase their areas of influence. In September 2014, the

Houthi insurgents expanded from their base in the north-west of the country and took control of the capital, Sana'a.

- 2.6.3 During 2015 fighting has taken place throughout the country, with 18 of the country's 22 governorates affected. Since 17 June 2015, the Saudi-led coalition forces have continued with aerial bombardment, damaging key infrastructure. Airstrikes were reported in 19 governorates. In Sana'a and Al Bayda, the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for a number of car bombings. Ground clashes, shelling, sniper fire and detonation of improvised explosive devices have been reported in various governorates.
- 2.6.4 An estimated 3,000 people were killed in the fighting between groups in the first nine months of 2014. The security situation deteriorated further during 2015 with fighting between existing parties exacerbated by the air-raids of the Saudi-led coalition of Arab states aimed primarily at the Houthi rebels, with the intention of supporting and restoring the government of President Hadi. The situation has been further complicated by the emergence of Islamic State as a militant force within the country. The Saudi air raids have targetted the Houthi forces particularly in central and northern Yemen including Sana'a, but many civilians have been killed and injured during these raids. The UN estimates that over 5,000 people have been killed since the escalation in the violence in March to the end of September with over 26,000 injured, though there may be further casualties not recorded in the UN figures. The data also includes both combatants and civilians (see [Security, Levels and nature of violence](#)).
- 2.6.5 Since July, when al Houthi influence extended into much of the south, including most of Aden, the government with support from southern militia groups and Saudi-led coalition ground and air forces, has pushed the al Houthis out of Aden and regained control in the southern governorates. The pro-government forces have also begun to challenge the al Houthis in central and northern Yemen, including in the capital Sana'a which has been subject to repeated air attack by the Saudi-led coalition. However, while the government has begun to regain control in the south, there have been some reports of al Houthi offensives in the south and intermittent bombings of government targets in Aden by Jihadist groups, notably Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State (IS). IS has also claimed responsibility for a number of bombings in al Houthi controlled areas, including in Sana'a, with high numbers of casualties. See [Security situation](#).
- 2.6.6 There are few reports of security-related incidents in eastern Yemen although these areas are increasingly under the control of Jihadist groups while the government has focussed on countering al Houthi forces in the south and moving to take control of the capital, Sana'a.
- 2.6.7 While violent clashes continue with civilians largely bearing the brunt of the conflict, fighting and armed clashes have increasingly moved into central and northern Yemen although the situation remains fluid. Aden has become increasingly stable, with lower numbers of violent incidents being reported, since July 2015 when the city was cleared of Houthi rebels by the government backed by Saudi-led coalition troops, and the Yemen authorities re-established control.

- 2.6.8 The United Nations has reported on the increasing impact of escalating violence on civilian populations, and on vital infrastructure in all of the major cities. However, the security situation in Aden is now stabilising, following the defeat of Houthi rebels in the city. President Hadi's government is slowly restoring law and order in Aden, supported by the United Arab Emirates, who are financing the building of police stations and the training of officers. [See Impact of Violence](#)
- 2.6.9 The current [October 2015] security situation in Aden and other areas of southern Yemen is unlikely to breach Article 15(c) of the QD. However, decision makers should refer to the latest available country information. ([see Annex A for a list of suggested sources providing regular updates](#)).
- 2.6.10 It is likely that, as at October 2015, in some areas, particularly in Sana'a and parts of the north and centre of the country, levels of indiscriminate violence are at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that a person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person.
- 2.6.11 Even where there is no general Article 15(c) risk, the decision maker must consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk.
- 2.6.12 For guidance on Article 15(c), including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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2.7 Are those at risk able to internally relocate within Yemen?

- 2.7.1 Travel within Yemen is restricted by the high and fluctuating levels of violence through most of the country. However, Hadramawt governorate and, since July 2015, Aden are reportedly calmer and more stable than elsewhere.
- 2.7.2 Fighting led to suspension of commercial airlines and closure of some airports, and closure of land borders with Saudi Arabia. The Saudi-led blockades on imports have also impacted on travel, as fuel is in short supply and has limited road transport. The airport in Aden is closed to commercial flights, and is heavily guarded by government troops. Yemeni air space is currently controlled by Saudi-led coalition forces. Yemenia Airways is operating limited flights from Sana'a to Amman. Their schedule is subject to last minute alterations or cancellation. (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.7.3 Government forces, tribal groups and the Houthi forces operate road blocks and control security check points. Major access routes into and out of principal cities are frequently blocked or closed. Government forces are attempting to deter Houthi incursions into government controlled areas. Houthi forces, and also local tribespeople in remote areas, seek to limit government control. In addition, local tribespeople harass and steal from travellers. Checkpoints and road blocks are more in evidence outside government controlled areas. See [Freedom of Movement](#).
- 2.7.4 Armed guards, including child soldiers in non-government militias, manning check points and road blocks pose a risk of arbitrary arrest and detention, discrimination and ill-treatment towards women, children and persons with disabilities.

- 2.7.5 Societal discrimination severely restricts the freedom of movement of women, although restrictions vary by location. However, the city of Aden has seen increasing stabilisation and the restoration of some level of law and order. (see [Freedom of movement](#))
- 2.7.6 Relocating to most parts of Yemen remains difficult, but it may be reasonable for persons to relocate to Aden and the more stable areas in the south of the country. Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person, including where they originate from in Yemen and where they will be returning to. Decision makers must refer to the latest available country information when considering internal relocation.
- 2.7.7 For further information on internal relocation and the factors to consider, see section 8.2 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Yemen is in a state of armed conflict which, following an escalation of violence in March 2015, has led to a deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation. Violence, including by aerial bombardment and armed clashes on the ground, continues, particularly in the north and centre of the country in and around Sana'a. However, since July 2015 the situation has improved in parts of southern Yemen, including Aden.
- 3.1.2 The humanitarian situation in Aden and some other areas of southern and eastern Yemen while severe is not in general at such a level as to breach Article 3. Nor do conditions present a general risk from indiscriminate violence such that removal would be a breach of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive (QD). Particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances might, nevertheless, place them at risk. However, the situation remains changeable and each case will need to be considered on its individual merits, taking into account up to date country information.
- 3.1.3 In Sana'a and other areas in the north, west and centre of the country the humanitarian and security conditions are likely, in many cases, to breach Article 3 and / or Article 15(c) of the QD. Each case will need to be considered on its individual merits, taking into account up to date country information.
- 3.1.4 Internal relocation to Aden and/or other areas in southern Yemen may be a viable option, depending on the person's individual circumstances.
- 3.2 If refused, is the claim one which is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002?
- 3.2.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

3.2.2 For further information on certification, see the [Asylum Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002.](#)

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4. Political situation

4.1.1 The Council for Foreign Relations background on Yemen stated:

'The modern Yemeni state was formed in 1990 with the unification of the U.S.- and Saudi-backed Yemeni Arab Republic, in the north, and the USSR-backed People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to the south. The military officer Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled North Yemen since 1978, assumed leadership of the new country. (President Saleh left Yemen in July 2011, following an injury sustained in a rocket attack, but returned in September 2011).¹ Somewhat larger than the state of California, Yemen has a population of about twenty-five million.

'Despite unification, the central government's writ beyond the capital of Sana'a was never absolute, and Saleh secured his power through patronage and by playing various factions off one another.

'Under Saleh, Yemen faced numerous challenges to its unity. Al-Hirak, a movement of southern Yemenis who felt marginalized under the post-unification government, rebelled in 1994; they have since pressed for greater autonomy within Yemen, if not secession. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the related Ansar al-Sharia insurgent group have captured territory in the south. The Houthi movement, whose base is among the Zaydi Shias of northern Yemen, rose up against Saleh's government six times between 2004 and 2010.

4.1.2 The same report stated:

'Yemen faces its biggest crisis in decades with the overthrow of its government by the Houthis, a Zaydi Shia movement backed by Iran. As the Houthis captured the capital of Sana'a and advanced south toward the Gulf of Aden in March 2015, a Saudi-led coalition launched an air campaign to reinstate Yemen's internationally recognized government.

'These developments have derailed a political transition following a 2011 uprising against longtime President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Amid factional fighting, al-Qaeda's Arabian Peninsula franchise has found new opportunities to capture territory. Meanwhile, in July 2015, the United Nations designated the humanitarian emergency in Yemen as severe and complex as those in Iraq, South Sudan, and Syria, while Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for a pause in hostilities to facilitate the delivery of relief supplies...'²

¹ BBC News: Yemen profile – Timeline – last updated 25 September 2015
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704951>

Date accessed 3 November 2015

² Council on Foreign Relations, 'Backgrounder: Yemen in Crisis', 8 July 2015,
<http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488>. Date Accessed: 3 August 2015.

4.1.3 The Berkeley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs reported:

“Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi served as president of Yemen from February 2012 until January 2015. A former Yemeni Army soldier, he became Yemen’s minister of defence in 1994 and was instrumental in defeating southern Yemeni secessionists. He was appointed vice president by President Ali Abdollah Saleh and served in that position for 17 years. After the 2011 protests, parliamentary opposition leaders and pro-government supporters agreed to transfer power from Saleh to Hadi, who became president following national elections. As president, Hadi initially achieved a modicum of success after centralizing the army’s vast bureaucracy and retaking much of the south from Al-Qaeda forces. However, after Houthi rebels stormed Sana’a in September 2014, he was forced to sign a power-sharing agreement with the Houthis. In January 2015, Hadi resigned from his office after Houthi rebels raided his residence and forced him into house arrest.”³

4.1.4 The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office website reported:

“President Hadi escaped Houthi-imposed house arrest on 20 February 2015 and has now established a government-in-exile in Riyadh. On 25 March 2015 a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, began air strikes in Yemen following the request for support from President Hadi to deter continued Houthi aggression. Airstrikes continue throughout the country and clashes continue across the country between competing forces. The political and security situation remains uncertain and volatile.”⁴

4.1.5 International Crisis Group wrote (in March 2015) in their Middle East Briefing no 45:

“Yemen is at war. The country is now divided between the Houthi movement, which controls the north and is rapidly advancing south, and the anti-Houthi coalition backed by Western and Gulf Cooperation Council allies that President Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi is cobbling together. On 25 March 2015, the Houthis captured a strategic military base north of the port city of Aden and took the defence minister hostage. That evening Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign, in coordination with nine other, mostly Arab states, to stop the Houthi advance and restore his government. Hadi left for Riyadh and will attend an Arab League summit on 28 March 2015. No major party seems truly to want to halt what threatens to become a regional war. The slim chance to salvage a political process requires that regional actors immediately cease military action and help the domestic parties agree on a broadly acceptable president or presidential council. Only

³ Berkeley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs: ‘Abdo Rabburh Mansour Hadi’ March 2015 <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/Abdo-Rabburh-mansour-hadi> Date Accessed: 15 July 2015

⁴ Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security Gov.UK Last updated 30 June 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security> Date Accessed: 15 June 2015

then can Yemenis return to the political negotiating table to address other outstanding issues.”⁵

4.1.6 The Briefing further stated:

“The Houthi-Hadi divide is the most explosive, but it is not the only conflict. Tensions are also unsettling the recent ‘marriage of convenience’ between the Houthis and former President Ali Abdollah Saleh, who, after being deposed in 2011, has taken advantage of popular dissatisfaction and tacitly allied himself with the Houthis against their common enemies to stage a political comeback through his party, the General People’s Congress (GPC), and possibly his son, Ahmed Ali Abdollah Saleh. Divisions in the south, which was an independent state prior to its 1990 union with the north, are rampant as well. Southern separatists are internally split and suspicious of Hadi, a southerner who supports continued unity with the north. Then there are al-Qaeda and a nascent Islamic State (IS) movement, both determined to fight the Houthis and take advantage of the state’s collapse to claim territory.”⁶

4.1.7 In March 2015, the Telegraph reported:

‘The U.S Special Forces evacuated from Yemen as the security situation deteriorates. The last remaining U.S troops have left Yemen as Sunni and Shia forces wage an increasingly lethal battle. America withdrew its remaining 100 Special Forces troops from Yemen in a sign of the rapid unraveling of the country – which on the 20 March was hit by one of its worst ever terrorist attacks.

‘The US soldiers left their base near Al-Houta, after al-Qaeda seized the city. Yemen has been hurtling towards civil war since last year, when the Houthis – who belong to a sect derived from Shia Islam – advanced from their northern heartland, taking over the capital Sana’a and nine of the country’s 21 provinces over the past six months, and raising fears of a civil war. The triple bomb blasts, which killed 150 and injured 351, were claimed by a splinter group of fighters from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) – marking a worrying escalation in the conflict between the Shia Houthis and the Sunni forces of Isil and al-Qaeda.’⁷

4.1.8 Reuter’s News Agency reported:

“Islamic State’s Yemen branch claimed responsibility for two bombings at a mosque in a northern district of the capital Sanaa that media (run by the Houthi militia) said killed at least 28 people and wounded 75 on Wednesday

⁵ International Crisis Group: ‘Yemen at War’ – Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No.45 27 March 2015 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/yemen/b045-yemen-at-war.aspx> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

⁶ International Crisis Group: ‘Yemen at War’ – Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No.45 27 March 2015 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/yemen/b045-yemen-at-war.aspx> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

⁷ The Telegraph: ‘US Special Forces evacuated from Yemen as security situation deteriorates’ 21 March 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/11487729/US-special-forces-evacuated-from-Yemen-as-security-situation-deteriorates.html> Date Accessed: 17 July 2015

(2 September 2015). The al-Mo'ayyad mosque, run by the Houthis in the al-Jarraf neighbourhood of Sanaa, has previously been targeted by the ultra-radical Islamic State, who regard the Iran-allied Houthis as heretics.

“The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency said in a text message that the first explosion was caused by a suicide bomber in the al-Mo'ayyad mosque, followed by a car bomb blast that targeted medics outside the building.”⁸

4.1.9 The Telegraph reported that President Hadi returned to Aden for three days, arriving on 22 September 2015 and meeting with various ministers and members of his Government. He subsequently left, to attend talks in New York with the United Nations. The Telegraph report stated:

“His return is the most concrete sign yet that a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia has secured enough territory from the Iran-allied Houthi militia for the exiled government to resume administering at least part of the country.

“Mr Hadi was greeted by Khaled Bahah, the prime minister, and several ministers who had returned to Aden last week to help set up an interim administration. An alliance of Arab states – mostly Yemen's wealthy Arabian Peninsula neighbours – intervened in the impoverished country's civil war in March with the aim of restoring Mr Hadi, and have helped drive the Iranian-allied Houthi forces back from Aden.

“Gulf ground troops are now trying to push into Houthi strongholds in northern Yemen and in Sana'a, which the group seized a year ago. So far, they appear to have made few gains.”⁹

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5. Protagonists

5.1.1 Janes reported in March 2015:

‘The central government does not exercise effective control over much of Yemen's territory. There are numerous powerful armed actors in Yemen that compete with the state, including ex-President Saleh, Houthi rebels [also know as Al Ansah], Al-Qaeda, southern secessionists, and armed independent tribes. Plans for a six-region federal state, announced by President Hadi on 10 February 2014, were rejected by the Ansar Allah Houthi Movement on the absorption of their stronghold in Sadaa into the new federal province of Azal, which denies them access to the Red Sea. In response, the Houthi have moved to establish de facto control over territory including the coastal provinces of Hajjah and Hodeidah, and in August 2014

⁸ Reuter's News Agency: 'Islamic State claims bomb attack on Yemeni mosque; 28 reported dead' 2 September 2015 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/09/02/uk-yemen-security-sanaa-idUKKCN0R21XG20150902?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews> Date accessed 2 October 2015

⁹ The Telegraph: 'Yemen President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi returns to Aden after 6 months exile' 22 September 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/11882780/Yemen-president-Abd-Rabbu-Mansour-Hadi-returns-to-Aden-after-six-month-exile.html> date accessed 1 October 2015

marched on Sana'a to force their claim on the government. Southern Movement representatives on the 21-member committee approved the new federal system. However, southern separatist factions rejected the new structure, as it divides former southern Yemeni provinces across two regions, separating their strongholds in Aden, Dali, and Lahj from the energy-rich Hadhramawt province. For their part, largely independent tribes are seeking greater autonomy through a system of governorates, with revenue collection and allocation handled by the federal government.

“... Yemen's transition government is faced with tackling the country's multiplicity of existing problems, including rampant corruption, a weak economy overly dependent on oil, and food and water shortages. Government control of large swathes of the country will continue to be threatened by the ongoing AQAP-led insurgency, Houthi attempts to establish de facto control over government institutions and territory as well as a disenfranchised southern secessionist movement. Meanwhile, there is a high risk of sectarian fighting in the north between Houthi Shia rebels and Sunni fighters taking hold in the capital and spreading eastwards into key oil-producing areas.’¹⁰

5.1.2 The main conflict is taking place between forces loyal to President Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, and those allied to Zaidi Shia rebels known as the Houthis, who forced president Hadi to flee Sana'a in February 2015.¹¹

5.1.3 On 25 March 2015, the BBC reported that President Hadi had fled the Presidential Palace, stating:

“Yemen's President Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi has fled his palace in Aden as Houthi rebels advance towards the city. Gunfire could be heard around the city centre, and security forces allied to the Houthis have taken over the international airport. The rebels have made rapid gains since seizing a key airbase only 60km (37 miles) from Aden on Wednesday morning. Government officials deny reports that the president has fled the country, and say he remains in Aden.”¹²

5.1.4 On 24 April 2015, the BBC reported that:

“Yemen's former president has called on his Houthi rebel allies to withdraw from territory they have seized in return for a halt to Saudi air strikes. Ali Abdollah Saleh appealed to various Yemeni factions and the Saudis to enter UN-mediated peace talks. Yemen was thrown into turmoil after the Houthi rebels forced President Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi to flee to Aden and then to Riyadh, the Saudi capital.”¹³

¹⁰ Janes, Sentinel Country Risk Assessments, Yemen, Executive summary, 25 March 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1303606>. Date Accessed: 24 July 2015

¹¹ BBC News: ‘Yemen Crisis: Who is fighting whom?’, 26 March 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423> Date Accessed: 14 July 2015

¹² BBC News: Yemen Crisis: President Hadi flees as Houthi rebels advance’, 25 March 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32048604> Date Accessed: 15 July 2015

¹³ BBC News: Yemen Conflict: ‘Ex-leader Saleh appeals to Houthi allies’ 24 April 2015

5.1.5 A report on the website of the Council of Foreign Relations noted:

“Political instability resulting from the Houthi uprising, and subsequent Saudi-led intervention, has created a power vacuum in which the Islamic State is exerting its influence. Combined with its recent string of deadly attacks in Yemen and increase in affiliate groups, the group poses a direct challenge to Yemen’s largest jihadist group—al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).”¹⁴

5.1.6 The report continued:

“Eight months after Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced his group’s expansion into the country, its numbers are estimated to have grown from eighty to three hundred. By January 2015, the Islamic State was reported to have a presence in at least three provinces in southern and central Yemen. Suicide bombings carried out on March 20 (2015) in Sanaa by an affiliate marked the group’s first major attack in the country, killing more than 130 people. Since then, the Islamic State and its affiliates have conducted at least five other attacks, including three more bombings in Sanaa within the last two months. Further, the number of affiliates appears to be growing. In April, an Islamic State-affiliated group, the Soldiers of the Caliphate in Yemen, released a video announcing that they “have come to Yemen.” Four days later, Yemen’s Second Mountaineer Brigade released a video showing the beheading of four Yemeni soldiers and shooting of ten others. The exact number of IS-affiliate groups in Yemen is unknown.”¹⁵

5.1.7 According to a report by AEI, ‘Critical Threats - 2015 Yemen Crisis Situation Report: 18 June 2015’:

“ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) militants continue to attempt to inflame sectarian tensions with the al Houthis. ISIS Wilayat Sana’a militants detonated four vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices targeting al Houthis sites in the capital, Sana’a, on 17 June, which was the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. The attacks hit two mosques, an al Houthi member’s home and the political headquarters of the al Houthi movement. ISIS Wilayat Sana’a quickly claimed credit for the attack via a statement distributed through Twitter. This is ISIS’s second spectacular attack in Yemen in 2015. ISIS Wilayat Sana’a carried out a similar attack targeting al Houthis in Sana’a and Sa’ada on 20 March. The attack is likely meant to goad the al Houthis into overreacting and cracking down further on Salafists or suspected ISIS or al Qaeda sympathizers.”¹⁶

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32458774> Date Accessed: 15 July 2015

¹⁴ Council on Foreign Relations – Politics, Power and Preventive Action: ‘The Rise of the Islamic State in Yemen’ 7 July 2015 <http://blogs.cfr.org/zenko/2015/07/07/guest-post-the-rise-of-the-islamic-state-in-yemen> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

¹⁵ Council on Foreign Relations – Politics, Power and Preventive Action: ‘The Rise of the Islamic State in Yemen’ 7 July 2015 <http://blogs.cfr.org/zenko/2015/07/07/guest-post-the-rise-of-the-islamic-state-in-yemen> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

¹⁶ AEI Critical Threats – 2015: Yemen Crisis Situation Report: 18 June 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-june-18-2015> Date Accessed: 16

6. Security situation

6.1 Situation in 2014

6.1.1 The US State Report on Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 – Yemen – reported:

6.1.2 “Non-state actors engaged in internal armed conflict with government forces and committed significant abuses, especially in the latter half of 2014. During the first nine months of the year, an estimated 3,000 persons died in fighting between tribal militias, Houthi insurgents, and government forces in the North; and militant secessionist elements, government forces, and AQAP militants in the South. AQAP repeatedly attacked security installations and conducted frequent campaigns to kill government officials and individuals considered to have violated sharia law. The use of child soldiers by nongovernment militias persisted.¹⁷

6.1.3 “Throughout 2014 the Houthis, a Shia movement, forcefully expanded from their base in the northwest part of the country, capturing cities and taking over territory. By September 2014 they seized government buildings and key infrastructure. On 21 September, 13 Yemeni parties signed a Peace and National Partnership Agreement (PNPA) to end the violence. On 9 November, a largely technocratic, transitional cabinet was appointed per the PNPA. Previously, a National Dialogue Conference (NDC) had met in 2013 and during 2014 to make recommendations for the country’s political future. The transitional government was also to implement these outcomes. The Houthi incursion increased sectarian hostilities, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) launched numerous reprisal attacks. Authorities did not always maintain effective control over the security forces.¹⁸

6.1.4 An Amnesty International Report for Yemen, 2014-2015, reported that:

“The year saw a continuing deterioration in security across the country, marked by killings of government and senior military officials, abductions of foreign nationals and other individuals, and resurgent armed conflict. In the North, dozens were killed and hundreds wounded during armed clashes that began in 2013 between the Huthis and supporters of the Sunni Islamist al-Islah party and the Salafi al-Rashad party in the town of Dammaj in Sa’ada governorate. Thousands of al-Rashad supporters from Dammaj, mainly the families of students studying at the al-Rashad-affiliated Dar al-Hadith religious institute, were forcibly displaced after a ceasefire agreement in January 2014.

July 2015

¹⁷ US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 – Yemen published 25 July 2015 section: Executive Summary

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2014&dclid=236630>

Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

¹⁸ US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 – Yemen published 25 July 2015 section: Executive Summary

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2014&dclid=236630>

Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

Despite the ceasefire agreement, the fighting spread southward and by mid-2014 Huthi fighters had clashed with their opponents and the Yemeni army and taken over most of the 'Amran, Hajja and al-Jawf governorates.

In September, Huthi forces attacked and took control of much of Sana'a after fighting in which over 270 people died and hundreds were wounded. Armed Huthi fighters in the capital looted army units, government buildings, political party headquarters, media outlets and the private homes of al-Islah party members. Later, despite agreeing to a ceasefire and joining a new government formed in November, Huthi forces moved south of Sana'a and clashed with local army units, tribesmen, and armed fighters affiliated with the armed group al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In response, AQAP carried out attacks in Sana'a and other cities, which killed and injured many civilians, including children.

"In the South, government forces clashed with AQAP fighters, who mounted suicide and other attacks targeting government installations, including an attack on 5 December 2013 that killed at least 57 people, including staff and patients, at a military hospital in Sana'a. In June, AQAP also attacked an army checkpoint in Shabwah, killing eight Yemeni army soldiers and six tribesmen assisting them. AQAP said the attacks were in response to US drone strikes on its forces, carried out with the support of the Yemeni government.

"The Yemeni army attacked AQAP positions in Abyan and Shabwa governorates in April; the ensuing fighting reportedly caused the forcible displacement of some 20,000 people. US military forces also attacked AQAP, carrying out drone strikes that targeted and killed AQAP militants, and also reportedly caused the death and injury of an unknown number of civilians. In December, an attempt by US military forces to free Luke Somers, a journalist held hostage by AQAP, resulted in his death and that of another hostage. Both government forces and armed opposition groups recruited and used child soldiers, according to a report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in August, despite efforts to ban the practice."¹⁹

- 6.1.5 "The United Nations verified a significant increase from 2013 of recruitment and use of children, with a total of 156 boys recruited and used between the ages of 9 and 17. The majority (140) of cases were perpetrated by Ansar Allah with a highly visible presence. The United Nations observed and documented armed children manning checkpoints, being present on armed vehicles and guarding buildings. Following Ansar Allah's expansion into the capital in September 2014, distinguishing between members of YAF and Ansar Allah became increasingly challenging, particularly at checkpoints. Eleven boys between the ages of 16 and 17 were recruited and used by Islah-backed tribal militias aligned with the Government or Salafists, all except two

¹⁹ Amnesty International Report: Yemen – 2014-2015 published 25 February 2015
<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1000012015ENGLISH.PDF> Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

of them in the frontlines. An additional 4 boys were verified as joining tribal armed groups in Al Bayda governorate.”²⁰

- 6.1.6 During the reporting period (Jan – Dec 2014), the security situation deteriorated significantly in the northern governorates where Al Houthi/Ansar Allah expanded its presence. Armed clashes took place between the Yemeni Armed Forces and Islah-backed pro-Government tribal militias and tribal armed groups, against Ansah Allah and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The situation in the southern governorates also remained tense, and armed clashes took place in Al Dhale’e. A mass offensive was conducted by YAF against AQAP and Ansar Al Sharia’, and clashes continued in Aden between Al Hirak (a southern cessation movement) supporters and the security forces.

6.2 Situation in 2015

- 6.2.1 The FCO observed in its travel advice for UK nationals up to date as of 14 October 2015 that:

‘President Hadi escaped Houthi-imposed house arrest on 20 February 2015 and has now established a government-in-exile in Riyadh. On 25 March 2015 a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, began air strikes in Yemen following the request for support from President Hadi to deter continued Houthi aggression. Airstrikes continue throughout the country and clashes continue across the country between competing forces. The political and security situation remains uncertain and volatile.’²¹

- 6.2.2 The same source noted: ‘Given the current political and security situation, there’s limited government control over parts of the country with Houthi or Al-Qaeda dominance in some areas. Access routes in and out of major cities may be closed or blocked.’²²

- 6.2.3 The UN General Assembly Security Council, in their report ‘Children and Armed Conflict’ of 5 June 2015, stated:

“As at April 2015, an international coalition had launched air strikes against Ansar Allah, which reportedly resulted in a significant number of child casualties.

- 6.2.4 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in June 2015 that:

“The disregard for international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict has come with a high human toll. Over a million people have had to flee their homes due to conflict. Nearly 2,800 people have been killed – half of whom are civilians – and almost 12,000 injured. The use of explosive

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly Security Council: ‘Children and armed conflict’ paragraphs 208 – 209 published 5 June 2015 <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/557abf904.pdf> Date Accessed: 22 July 2015

²¹ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security updated 14 October 2015, accessed: 14 October 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security>

²² FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security updated 14 October 2015, accessed: 14 October 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security>

weapons in populated areas and the targeting of civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, power stations and water installations, which are indispensable for the lives and livelihoods of the civilian population, are unacceptable, and are further impacting on their wellbeing.²³

6.2.5 The FCO's travel advice for UK citizens for Yemen updated to 30 June 2015 stated:

'Since 21 September 2014, the Houthis, an armed group originally from the Saada region of Yemen, have occupied key positions in Sana'a and established their presence in governorates to the south, east and west of Sana'a including Hodeida, Dhamar, al Bayda, Marib, Ibb, Zinjibar, Taiz and Aden. This has led to significant armed clashes between Houthi forces and other armed groups, including AQAP and tribes.²⁴ However, Aden has since been cleared of Houthi forces.²⁵

6.2.6 Jane's reported in July 2015 that:

"The security vacuum in Yemen is worsening due to the erosion of the central authority and the increasing fragmentation of the Yemeni army.

'... the erosion of central authority and the fragmentation of the Yemeni army, will likely continue to give Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) unrestricted freedom of manoeuvre. Militants belonging to AQAP and the Hadramawt National Council seized Al-Riyan airport, the Air Defence 190 Brigade's headquarters, and the Dhabah oil terminal, all in Al-Mukalla, on 16 April. The city has been under the control of AQAP-affiliated tribes since 2 April. The seizure of territory by AQAP is a strong indication of how the group is exploiting the expanding multi-sided civil war in Yemen and the collapse of the Yemeni army. With military units continuing to show unwillingness to confront AQAP and halt its advances, the group will most likely continue to co-opt local tribes, using the pretext of being the sole force able to challenge the Houthi, and provide social services and some form of proto-governance. As there is no effective ground fighting force in Yemen able to check AQAP's advances, USUS unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) drone raids or Saudi airstrikes are currently the only means of countering the group.

'However, AQAP's gradual merger with local tribes and a security vacuum that is likely to continue in coming months are likely to minimise the impact of airstrikes against the group's militants. The group will be likely to continue to remain unchecked on the ground, thereby expanding its territorial presence and attack capability in other provinces, such as Shabwa, Lahij, Abyan, and Marib. AQAP's ability to co-opt further tribes and hold control over territory

²³ Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan - 2015 Revision (June 2015) published 19 June 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2015-revision-june-2015-enar>
Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

²⁴ FCO, Foreign travel advice, Yemen, updated 30 June 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> Date Accessed: 23 July 2015

²⁵ MCW News (Media With Conscience): 'Yemeni anti-rebel forces recapture Aden airport' 14 July 2015 <http://www.mwcnews.net/news/middle-east/52936-yemeni-anti-rebel.html> date accessed 23 October 2015

will probably be dependent on the group's capacity to provide money, social outreach programmes, and integration into local government through local tribal networks. As such, armed raids targeting banks, post offices, and army bases are likely to increase in frequency in southern cities such as Tarim, Seiyun, Ash Shihr, Shibam, and Ataq.

'Meanwhile, the Islamic State claimed its first mass-casualty suicide bombings targeting Houthi mosques in Sanaa on 20 March 2015, and announced the formation of a 'wilayat Sanaa' (Sanaa province) the same day. The Islamic State wilaya of Sanaa also claimed four vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attacks against Houthi targets on 18 June, which indicate how the group, currently active in seven Yemeni provinces, is gradually increasing its operational capabilities. Competition between AQAP and the Islamic State is also likely to translate into an increase in major mass-casualty attacks targeting security forces, Houthi positions, public places, mosques, hotels, and the residual Western presence in the country.²⁶

6.2.7 The AEI Critical Threats report stated:

"UN-led peace talks in Geneva are unlikely to succeed as both sides refuse to compromise. The UN has extended the political talks until at least 19 June as the talks continue to make little progress. Both the al Houthis and Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi's government are accusing each other of attempting to undermine the talks. Al Houthi delegates stated that Hadi's government is demanding the militants retreat from Aden and Taiz, which the al Houthis hold as unacceptable conditions and Hadi's government considers a non-negotiable demand. The al Houthis are also rejecting calls for them to decrease their delegation, which includes politicians loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and belonging to the General People's Congress, from twenty two delegates to ten. Al Houthi leader Abdol Malik al Houthi also accused Israel, America and Saudi Arabia of trying to impose their agendas on the Geneva talks. Meanwhile, Al Houthi militants in Yemen bombed the house of delegate Abdol Aziz Jubbari in Dhamar on 17 June. Jubbari is currently participating as part of Abdo Rabbuh Mansour Hadi's government delegation in the Geneva talks. The attack was likely meant to intimidate Jubbari and inflame tensions at the Geneva dialogue."

6.2.8 The AEI Critical Threats report of July 2015 stated:

"Popular resistance fighters are increasingly targeting al Houthi convoys moving reinforcements in south-central Yemen. Popular resistance fighters ambushed an al Houthi convoy in Ibb on 15 June, killing 15 al Houthi militants, in one of the deadliest ambushes the forces have carried out in recent weeks. Anti-al Houthi fighters also attacked an al Houthi convoy carrying reinforcements to Taiz city in Naqil Samara in central Ibb on 16 June. The attacks come as the al Houthis are starting to lose some territory

²⁶ Janes, Sentinel Security Risk Assessments, Yemen, Security, 17 July 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1303456> Date Accessed: 23 July 2015

in Taiz and Lahij to anti-al Houthi forces. Separately, the al Houthis continue to attack Saudi territory with artillery fire along the Saudi-Yemeni border.”

“Anti-al Houthi politicians are calling for the return of General Ali Mohsen al Ahmar to fight the al Houthis. Al Jawf’s governor Mohammed Salem bin Abud has also called for the return of Yemeni Major General Ali Mohsen al Ahmar to Yemen in order to unify and lead popular resistance forces against the al Houthis. Ali Mohsen al Ahmar previously commanded Yemeni military forces during the Sa’ada Wars against the al Houthis in 2004-2010.

Previous unconfirmed reporting indicated that Ali Mohsen was in Ma’rib, central Yemen, although his last known location was in Saudi Arabia.

Separately, the al Houthis recently seized the capital of al Jawf and looted the house of the commander of the 115th Infantry Brigade.”

“ISIS’s attack on the al Houthis may push the al Houthis to have a strong military reaction and crack down on Sunni dissenters. Such a scenario will undermine ongoing attempts at a political solution to Yemen’s conflict and will add a dangerous sectarian dimension to the conflict. Saudi Arabia may also be tempted to increase military operations against the al Houthis should the group increase its attacks. Such a scenario would weaken the al Houthis, which is the only group currently fighting ISIS in Yemen.”²⁷

6.2.9 The UNOCHA reported in June 2015:

“The districts most heavily impacted by the conflict are concentrated in Aden, Sa’ada, Hajjah, Abyan, Al Dhale’e, Lahj, Taizz and Sana’a. Large-scale internal displacement began in Lahj and Al Dhale’e in late March 2015 as armed clashes escalated in the South, eventually forcing nearly 250,000 people from their homes and into neighbouring areas. As airstrikes and shelling intensified in the North in April and May 2015, mass displacement was observed primarily in Sa’ada, Amran and Hajjah governorates. On 30 March 2015, a pre-existing IDP camp in Hajjah was struck, dispersing most of the camp population of 16,000 and thousands more from the surrounding area. Large-scale displacement was reported in Sa’ada in the wake of heavy airstrikes on 8-9 May 2015, following a warning that the entire governorate would be considered a military zone.”²⁸

6.2.10 In October, AEI Critical threats reported that: ‘The Saudi-led coalition’s recent victories in southern and northern Yemen appear to have pressured the al Houthis to accept Yemeni President Yemeni Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi’s preconditions for negotiations.’ The same source noted that:

‘The al Houthis officially accepted Hadi’s preconditions for negotiations. The al Houthis and their allies in the General People’s Congress party submitted official letters to the UN, stating their adherence to a seven-point plan

²⁷ AEI Critical Threats – 2015: Yemen Crisis Situation Report: 18 June 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-june-18-2015> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

²⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview published 23 June 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=qXMkUBUSIP0bdaiEiBB9UXQXliWWW7MIGopaXOvGaf8> , Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

proposed at talks in Muscat, Oman, last month and acceptance of the terms in UNSCR 2216, which includes complete disarmament and withdrawal from seized territories, on October 6. The group had not previously recognized UNSCR 2216 publicly.

'The al Houthis secured support from Shi'a allies in preparation for an extended stalemate. Al Houthi Revolutionary Committee Chairman Mohammed Ali al Houthi asserted that the al Houthi operations would focus on attacking Saudi Arabia instead of retaking Aden in an October 1 interview with al Mayadeen News, a pro-Hezbollah news outlet in Lebanon.'²⁹

6.2.11 See [Annex A](#) for a list of sources that provided updated information.

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6.3 Southern Yemen

6.3.1.1 Southern Yemen includes the governorates of Aden, Ibb, Al Bayda, Al Dhaleh, Lahij, Abyan and Taiz.

²⁹ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis Situation Report: (7 October 2015) Date accessed 22 October 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-october-7-2015>

³⁰ AEI Critical Threats, [Map of Yemen](#), undated, accessed on 14 October 2015

6.3.2 A policy paper by the Washington Institute noted that:

‘Aden fell to the Houthis on March 20 [2015] following a series of long-range road and helicopter advances by the northern rebels. The lightning assault captured Taizz (Yemen's third-largest city, positioned on the road to Aden), then al-Anad Air Base (a joint U.S.-Yemeni counterterrorism facility sixty kilometers north of Aden), and finally Aden's international airport and presidential palace. Only pockets of Hadi and Southern Resistance control remained in the city, mainly in two coastal peninsulas: Crater, the site of Aden's main port, and Little Aden, the site of its refinery and oil storage tanks.’³¹

6.3.3 However on 17 July, Hadi loyalists and allied Yemeni ‘Southern Resistance’ forces with support from a ground deployment of Saudi and United Arab Emirate (UAE) troops re-took Aden from the Houthi rebels under ‘Operation Golden Arrow’.³² Later in July, the Anti-Houthi forces expanded their areas of control north of Aden city. AEI Critical Threats observed on 27 July that:

‘Anti-al Houthi resistance forces continue to battle the al Houthis for control of territory north of Aden. Anti-al Houthi forces fought the al Houthis for control of al Anad Airbase in Lahij governorate, north of Aden, on July 26 after Southern Resistance fighters pushed the al Houthis out of territory surrounding al Anad. There have been three previous attempts on July 19, 22, and 24 to seize al Anad Airbase from the al Houthis. Southern Resistance fighters in Aden also reportedly captured on July 25 Abdul Khaliq al Houthi, who is the al Houthi overall military commander and brother of the al Houthi leader, Abdul Malik al Houthi. The al Houthis are battling to stay in control of Taiz governorate and shelled al Dhaleh city, which the al Houthis lost control of in late May. Although anti-al Houthi forces have momentum in pushing the al Houthis north, the al Houthis appear determined to remain in control of the remaining territory they hold.’³³

6.3.4 AEI reported on 3 August, that ‘Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continues to control one of Yemen’s port cities and may be seeking to expand direct control in Wadi Hadramawt as both Yemeni and regional security forces focus on the fight in central Yemen. The Saudi Arabia-led coalition appears to be preparing for a second offensive as part of “Operation Golden Arrow” to roll back the territory held by the al Houthis.’³⁴

6.3.5 The same source reported on 10 August that:

³¹ The Washington Institute: The Saudi-UAE War Effort in Yemen (Part 1): Operation Golden Arrow in Aden, 10 August 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-saudi-uae-war-effort-in-yemen-part-1-operation-golden-arrow-in-aden> accessed on 14 October 2015

³² The Washington Institute, [The Saudi-UAE War Effort in Yemen \(Part 1\): Operation Golden Arrow in Aden](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-saudi-uae-war-effort-in-yemen-part-1-operation-golden-arrow-in-aden), 10 August 2015, accessed on 14 October 2015

³³ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis: Gulf of Aden Security Review: July 27 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/gulf-aden-security-review/gulf-aden-security-review-july-27-2015> date accessed 22 October 2015

³⁴ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis: Situation reports 3 August 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-3-2015> date accessed 22 October 2015

'Anti-al Houthi forces expanded their foothold in southern Yemen and continued their northern push against the al Houthis. In Lahij, anti-al Houthi militias, supported by foreign troops, seized the al Anad military base and 10 towns on 3 August . An anti-al Houthi commander reported that the forces had nearly liberated Lahij and planned to liberate Abyan next. Popular resistance groups also took control of the Labuza military base on August 6. Separately in Abyan, anti-al Houthi forces besieged the al Houthi-controlled 15th Infantry Brigade camp in Zinjibar on August 3 and seized control of Zinjibar on 9 August . Three soldiers from the United Arab Emirates were killed in the Operation Golden Arrow offensive on Zinjibar.

'Finally in Taiz and Ibb, popular resistance groups seized Jabal al Arous, Taiz and Jabal al Muqatr, Ibb on 3 August . Saudi Arabian forces allegedly established an air presence over Taiz city, and local sources reported that the Gulf nation deployed warships to the port of Mocha on 6 August . Anti-al Houthi officials in al Dhaleh, Taiz, and Ibb created a Council of Resistance to support Operation Golden Arrow and popular resistance groups on August 6. The officials elected Major General Sheikh Abdel Wahid Hazam al Shalay al Daam, a famous anti-al Houthi leader in Ibb, as president and Hani al Sayadi as vice president. Anti-al Houthi militias and foreign troops took control of al Siteen street in Taiz city on August 9. Popular resistance groups seized three districts in Ibb and established checkpoints in these areas on 10 August .'³⁵

6.3.6 AEI reported on 15 August that:

'Anti-al Houthi coalition forces consolidated their control of southern Yemen. In addition to the gains in Abyan, Taiz Popular Resistance Coordination Council spokesman Rashad al Shar'abi called for the remaining al Houthi forces, including troops loyal to former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh, to withdraw from Taiz city and surrender their weapons on 12 August . Shar'abi stated popular resistance groups would focus on liberating Taiz and restoring the government institutions of Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi.... Yemeni president Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi continued efforts to rebuild his government in southern Yemen. Hadi's government appointed new governors for Lahij and Abyan on 10 August . The Yemeni government's Minister of Tourism, Minister of Justice, Minister of Water, and Minister of Transportation arrived in Aden on 11 August .'³⁶

6.3.7 The same source opined that 'Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continues to exploit the recent successes of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition's "Operation Golden Arrow" to increase its territorial control in Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition appears to be preparing for a third offensive as part of "Operation Golden Arrow" to secure northern Yemen.'³⁷

³⁵Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation report: 10 August 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-10-2015> date accessed 22 October 2015

³⁶ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation report 15 August 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-15-2015> date accessed 22 October 2015

³⁷ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation report 15 August 2015

6.3.8 AEI observed on 21 August that: ‘The initial momentum against the al Houthis following the start of “Operation Golden Arrow,” appears to be waning as the al Houthis mount counter-offensives in southern Yemen. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) continue to benefit from the conflict [between the Saudi-led coalition and the al Houthis].’³⁸

6.3.9 On 26 August, AEI reported that: ‘Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) continue to leverage Saudi-led coalition victories to increase territorial control and recruitment in Yemen. Coalition forces began efforts to strengthen Yemeni President Abdu Mansour Hadi’s ability to govern and control recently liberated territories in southern and eastern Yemen.’ The source also observed that

‘Saudi-led coalition forces regained some territory after al Houthi counterattacks in southern and eastern Yemen and pushed to take control of al Bayda. In Ibb, Taiz, and Shabwah, popular resistance groups seized more territory and continued their efforts to defeat the remaining al Houthi forces. In the central al Bayda governorate, Saudi-led forces launched a military operation to expel the al Houthis in coordination with anti-al Houthi militias. Separately, suspected AQAP militants detonated a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device near an al Houthi-controlled building in al Bayda city.’

6.3.10 The same source also reported attacks by ISIS and AQAP against government / coalition forces in Aden, as well as efforts by the coalition to support the reinstatement of law and order in areas under government (and coalition backed) control:

‘AQAP and ISIS conducted military and political activities in Aden despite the Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi government’s claim of securing the governorate. AQAP militants attacked key government and military buildings and seized two districts in Aden on August 22 before withdrawing the next day... Saudi-led coalition forces started efforts to curb southern jihadist activities by implementing police training and equipment programs to rebuild the Yemeni security forces and redeploying coalition troops to the recently liberated territories.’³⁹

6.3.11 The AEI reported on 14 September further attempts by the Saudi-led coalition to improve security conditions in Aden: ‘Saudi-led coalition forces and Hadi’s government are attempting to improve Aden’s security. Saudi-led coalition troops deployed to Aden to curb criminal activity and protect the city’s key

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-15-2015> date accessed 22 October 2015

³⁸ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation reports 21 August 2015

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-21-2015> date accessed 23 October 2015

³⁹ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation reports 26 August 2015

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-26-2015> date accessed 23 October 2015

facilities on September 13.⁴⁰ By mid September, members of the government had returned to Aden:

'[President] Hadi and several cabinet members returned to Aden to re-establish his government in Yemen. On September 16, Yemeni Vice President Khaled Bahah and seven Yemeni ministers arrived in Aden, where Bahah asserted in meetings that the liberation of Taiz and restoration of Aden's media and educational institutions were among his main priorities. The Yemeni government met with UAE government delegations and humanitarian aid groups implementing security cooperation and social service projects in Aden. Yemeni President Hadi arrived in Aden and set up his residence in the al Qasir hotel in al Sha'ab city on September 22.'⁴¹

6.3.12 AEI reported on 2 October that:

'Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government still faces challenges in southern Yemen, where Hadi lacks popular legitimacy and the al Houthis are mounting a counteroffensive. Hadi tried to reduce tensions between his government and southerners by nominating Yemeni southern resistance leader Aydarus Qasim al Zubaydi as governor of Aden on September 28. Separately, the al Houthis mounted a counteroffensive against Saudi-led coalition positions in southern Yemen on September 30, seizing strategic territory in Taiz and Lahij and transferring several military vehicles into Lahij, potentially staging for an attack on Aden. Pro-al Houthi forces also fired a ballistic missile at the Salah al Din military base in Aden on October 1. The al Houthis' ability to contest coalition control in Lahij will prevent the coalition and Hadi's government from consolidating positions in southern Yemen.'⁴²

6.3.13 UNOCHA report on 29 September 2015:

'Fighting escalated in Taiz city and Taizz Governorate, leading to insecurity and fuel shortages. This has impeded the flow of life-saving medical supplies and water distribution through the cross-line movements. According to humanitarian partners, Al- Rawda hospital in Taiz city has not received medical supplies for at least one month, and humanitarian supplies, including medicines for children, have been confiscated by armed groups. The water supply network in Taiz city, which previously served over 300,000 people, has remained non-functional since 18 August due to damage and the inability to move fuel supplies from the central depot to the water-pumping stations.'⁴³

⁴⁰ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation report 14 September 2015

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-september-14-2015> date accessed 23 October 2015

⁴¹ Critical Threats: Yemen Crisis situation report 22 September 2015 date accessed 23 October 2015

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-september-22-2015>

⁴² Critical Threats: Yemen crisis situation reports 2 October 2015

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-october-2-2015> date accessed 23 October 2015

⁴³ UNOCHA: Humanitarian Bulletin: Yemen 29 September 2015

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA_Yemen_Humanitarian_Bulletin_Issue_3-29_Sept2015.pdf Date accessed 15 October 2015

6.3.14 During early October coalition forces consolidated their control in Taiz governorate. ‘... the Saudi-led coalition seized central Taiz city. The coalition also mobilized forces from Lahij to contest al Houthi positions along the Taiz-Lahij border. Coalition forces continued efforts to disrupt al Houthi maritime supply lines near Taiz by seizing islands around the Bab al Mandeb and bombing the port of Mokha on October 5.’ However government positions were attacked in Aden by ISIS, which:

‘[perpetrated a]... series of bombings in Aden undermined Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi’s efforts to portray his government as the dominant security provider in southern Yemen. ISIS Wilayat Aden-Abyan, a new joint operations cell, claimed to have detonated four suicide vehicle-borne improvised devices near Yemeni government and Saudi-led coalition sites in Aden on October 6. Yemeni government and Saudi-led coalition spokesmen attempted to downplay the bombings’ impact to assuage local concerns about their ability to secure southern Yemen on October 7.’⁴⁴

6.3.15 UNOCHA reported on 20 July 2015:

‘Violence increased dramatically during the reporting period [10 to 16 July 2015]. Intense fighting was centred in Aden and is now moving north to neighbouring governorates including Lahj, Taizz, Abyan and Al Dhale’e. There are unconfirmed reports of large numbers of civilian casualties. As of 10 July, 783 deaths had been registered in health facilities in Aden since the conflict escalated in March (compared with 3,640 deaths nationally, or 22 per cent of all deaths). This number is expected to rise significantly as the impact of this fighting is assessed.’⁴⁵

6.4 Central and northern Yemen

6.4.1 By mid September, the Saudi-led coalition troops were considering attacking Sana’a, held by the Houthis.⁴⁶ AEI observed on 29 September that:

‘Saudi-led coalition forces transferred more troops and military equipment to Ma’rib as coalition planes continued an intensive bombing campaign against al Houthi sites in northern and central Yemen. Coalition forces seized more territory in Ma’rib on September 25 and September 28 and destroyed several al Houthi ballistic missile sites in central Yemen on September 27. The al Houthis shot down an Apache helicopter near the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border on September 26. Strong public backlash against the bombing campaign’s high civilian casualties in Hajjah, Taiz, and Sana’a will challenge support for the coalition. Humanitarian organizations and international officials, including Amnesty International and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, condemned

⁴⁴Critical Threats: Yemen crisis situation reports 7 October 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-october-7-2015> date accessed 21 October 2015

⁴⁵UNOCHA, Yemen humanitarian emergency situation report no. 15; 13 July 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-emergency-situation-report-no-15-13-july-2015>
date accessed 22 October 2015

⁴⁶Critical Threats: Yemen crisis situation reports 22 September 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-september-22-2015> date accessed 21 October 2015

the coalition's bombing campaign despite Saudi Arabia's efforts to deny responsibility and deflect criticism. Separately, senior Yemeni and Saudi officers announced that coalition forces were preparing to begin operations to liberate al Jawf and Sana'a on September 28 and September 29.⁴⁷

6.4.2 The UN OCHA reported on 29 September 2015:

'Thirty-five civilians were killed and 120 injured in a single attack on one of Sana'a's most densely populated areas, where people were shopping in preparation for the Eid holiday. On 24 September, a suicide attack on Balili mosque during Eid prayers killed at least 25 people and injured dozens.

'There are continued reports of damages to civilian and UN property. According to UN sources, an air strike destroyed a UNICEF warehouse that contained water supplies for 11,000 people in Dhamar Governorate, south of Sana'a, on 17 September. WFP's premises in Sana'a were damaged on 18 September, and a world heritage site in Sana'a was damaged the following day. In Sa'ada Governorate, air strikes and cross-border shelling continued to kill and injure civilians, cut electricity and destroy civilian infrastructure, such as private residences, markets and schools. As of 12 September, some 66 schools were either totally or partially damaged. The escalation of violence, particularly from 15 to 20 September, has seen an exodus of people from their homes in search of safety. A total of 40,000 people are internally displaced within the Governorate.'⁴⁸

6.5 Levels and nature of violence

6.5.1 The UN Security Council, in Resolution 2216 (2015) stated:

"Expressed concern at the ability of AQAP to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, mindful that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed... and called on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law."

6.5.2 It further reaffirmed, "... the need for all parties to ensure the safety of civilians, including those receiving assistance, as well as the need to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel, and urged all parties to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance..."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Critical threats: Yemen crisis situation reports 29 September 2015
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-september-29-2015> date accessed 15 October 2015

⁴⁸ UNOCHA: Humanitarian Bulletin: Yemen 29 September 2015
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA_Yemen_Humanitarian_Bulletin_Issue_3-29_Sept2015.pdf Date accessed 15 October 2015

UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, Yemen 29 September 2015, accessed on 15 October 2015

⁴⁹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015) published 14 April 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/553deebc4.pdf> date accessed 21 August 2015

6.5.3 The UN's Yemen Situation, Emergency Response, April – September 2015, dated 12 June 2015 stated: 'The situation in Yemen has deteriorated dramatically since fighting and violence intensified in late March 2015. Eighteen of the 22 governorates are being affected by the conflict. Deepening insecurity and violence have taken a heavy toll on civilian lives and triggered large-scale displacement. There are an estimated 1 million internally displaced people in Yemen.'

6.5.4 In a press release of 2 July 2015, the UN reported that: 'In the past three months, some 3,000 Yemenis have been killed, half of them civilians, and 14,000 injured.'⁵⁰ UNOCHA reported on 13 July 2015 that: 'Fighting has intensified throughout Yemen, with more than 1,100 casualties reported since last week.' It also reported that:

'Violence continues to escalate throughout Yemen. This week has seen some of the deadliest days since the escalation of the conflict in March, with mosques, schools and four markets hit by attacks that caused civilian deaths. Over 20,000 casualties – both deaths and injuries - have now been recorded by health facilities in Yemen [since the start of the conflict in March 2015; however not clear if civilian only or combatants as well].'⁵¹

6.5.5 The same report also stated that: 'Civilians continue to pay the highest price in this conflict. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights counted more than 5,500 casualties (deaths and injuries combined) nationally, indicating that fighting is taking place in neighbourhoods where civilians live and work.'⁵²

6.5.6 The United Nations General Assembly Security Council reported on 5 June 2015 that:

"The numbers of child casualties increased significantly from the previous reporting period, with 74 children (56 boys, 18 girls) killed and 244 (176 boys, 68 girls) maimed. Child casualties due to mines and other explosive devices more than doubled, with 10 children killed and 54 maimed. Ansar Allah was targeted and attacked, including by two suicide bombings that killed 14 and injured 25 boys. A total of 14 children were killed and 30 maimed by six improvised explosive devices, including an attack on an Ansar Allah checkpoint. Another 10 children were killed and 37 injured due to shelling, and two boys and three girls were maimed as a result of aerial bombings, including one drone strike on 29 September in Al Jawf, which maimed one boy and two girls.

"The United Nations verified 35 attacks against schools. For example, all 10 schools attacked in Amanah Al Asimah governorate were destroyed during clashes that took place in September 2014 between Ansar Allah and YAF

⁵⁰ UN News Service: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51327#.VZws4PIVhBe>

⁵¹ UNOCHA, Yemen humanitarian emergency situation report no. 15; 13 July 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-emergency-situation-report-no-15-13-july-2015>
date accessed 21 July 2015

⁵² UNOCHA, Yemen humanitarian emergency situation report no. 15; 13 July 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-emergency-situation-report-no-15-13-july-2015>
date accessed 21 July 2015

and pro-Government tribal militias. Nine attacks were attributed to YAF and eight to Ansar Allah. In many cases schools were forced to close completely.”⁵³

- 6.5.7 UNICEF reported on 2 October that: Six months of unremitting violence in Yemen have left at least 505 children dead, 702 injured and more than 1.7 million at risk of malnutrition... UNICEF has verified attacks on or damage to 41 schools and 61 hospitals as a result of the fighting.⁵⁴
- 6.5.8 The US State Department report on events in 2014 that politically motivated killings by non-state actors, including terrorist and insurgent groups, increased, and targeted killings of military, security and government officials by those claiming affiliation with AQAP increased significantly during 2014. The number of killings involving gunmen on motorcycles increased to the extent that the government banned motorcycles in the capital. In January 2014, motorcyclists shot and killed Ahmed Sharafeddin, a prominent Houthi leader and NDC delegate, and in May suspected AQAP members on a motorcycle shot and killed a military intelligence officer in Lahj Governorate. Unknown assailants killed moderate Houthi leader Mohammad Mutawakil in November 2014.⁵⁵ On 20 March 2015, suicide bombers killed 137 people, and wounded hundreds of others, in an attack on a mosque in Sana'a.⁵⁶
- 6.5.9 A UNOCHA / Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) report released in September 2015, covering the period 1 January to 31 July 2015, stated that:
- ‘As fighting has spread across the country, millions of civilians in Yemen are suffering from the devastating consequences of armed violence. As of 10 September 2015 the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had registered 2,204 civilian deaths and 4,711 civilian injuries from armed violence in Yemen. These figures include civilian deaths and injuries from all forms of armed violence in Yemen, including but not limited to the use of explosive weapons.’⁵⁷
- 6.5.10 The same report noted that:
- ‘Civilians are bearing the brunt of the violence in Yemen, and a population already suffering desperate poverty, insecurity, malnutrition and limited access to health and sanitation is now facing a severe humanitarian emergency. Aid agencies on the ground estimate that some 21million people

⁵³ United Nations General Assembly Security Council – ‘Children and Armed Conflict – report of the Secretary General published 5 June 2015, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1434368065_n1510923.pdf Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

⁵⁴ http://www.unicef.org/media/media_85714.html

⁵⁵ US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 – Yemen published 25 July 2015 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=236630> Date Accessed: 22 July 2015

⁵⁶ Reuters News Agency: ‘Suicide bombers kill 137 in Yemen mosque attacks’ 20 March 2015 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/20/us-yemen-attack-bomb-idUSKBN0MG11J20150320> date accessed 28 October 2015.

⁵⁷ UNOCHA / ‘Action on Armed Violence, State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen’ p1, September 2015, <https://docs.unocha.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=I2aOIZPr9OIYQdyjll15XnwKroT8yYT1pHi5Y7Ut48,&dl> accessed 14 October 2015

– 80 per cent of the entire population– are in need of some form of humanitarian protection or assistance. This is a 33 per cent increase in needs since the conflict began.

‘The spiralling violence in Yemen in 2015 has been characterised by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. All parties to the conflict have repeatedly used heavy explosive weapons in fighting since March, including in populated areas. In addition to aerial bombing in the capital Sana’a and other locations across the country, southern governorates in particular have seen heavy ground fighting with rockets and mortars between Houthi militants and government allied fighters. As a further threat to the protection of civilians, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have carried out deadly bombings as they take advantage of the insecurity gripping Yemen.’⁵⁸

6.5.11 The reported also noted:

‘Civilians have borne the brunt of explosive violence in Yemen in 2015. AOA V recorded 124 incidents of explosive violence in Yemen between 1 January and 31 July 2015... In these incidents, a total of 5,239 deaths and injuries from explosive weapon use were recorded.

‘Of these, 4,493 were civilians (1,363 civilian deaths and 3,130 civilian injuries). This means that civilians have made up 86 per cent of deaths and injuries that AOA V has recorded from explosive weapons in Yemen between 1 January and 31 July 2015.

‘The intensity of explosive violence in the country has meant that more civilian deaths and injuries from explosive weapons were recorded in Yemen during the first seven months of 2015 than in any other country in the world.’⁵⁹

6.5.12 Of the civilian casualties, 60% were as a result of air-launched explosives (i.e from aircraft); 23% ground-launched; and 17% improvised explosive devices. The casualties were mostly in the largest urban areas, with the majority in Sana’a and surrounding districts (53%; 2,361 recorded casualties (out of a governorate population of over 1 million⁶⁰)); 19% in Aden (out of a population of 700,000⁶¹); 10% in Hajjah (with a population of over 1.7 million⁶²) and 9% in Taiz (with a population of over 2.8 million⁶³).⁶⁴

⁵⁸ UNOCHA / ‘Action on Armed Violence, State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen’ p1, September 2015, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Yemen_EWIPA_report.pdf accessed 14 October 2015

⁵⁹ UNOCHA / ‘Action on Armed Violence, State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen’ p1, September 2015, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Yemen_EWIPA_report.pdf accessed 14 October 2015

⁶⁰ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

⁶¹ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

⁶² Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

⁶³ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

6.5.13 The BBC reported, on 30 September 2015:

“Some 5,000 people, including at least 2,355 civilians [out of a total population estimated to be over 26 million⁶⁵], have been killed in Yemen since the escalation in March of the conflict between forces loyal to President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and those allied to the Houthi rebel movement. The fighting has spread to 21 out of 22 of the country's provinces and shows no sign of ending. Almost 1.5 million people have been displaced. The destruction of infrastructure and a naval blockade by a Saudi-led coalition carrying out air strikes against the rebels have led to 21 million people - 80% of the population - being deprived of life-sustaining commodities and services.”⁶⁶

6.5.14 The International Medical Corps reported in October 2015 that:

“...Security conditions in Aden and Lahj governorates remain volatile. In Lahj, ongoing clashes are leading to some restrictions on movement. In Aden, the Saudi-led coalition maintains control of the governorate and Yemen's government-in-exile has re-established a presence in Aden city. After six months of closure, the Aden fuel refinery resumed operations at the end of September, functioning at 50 percent capacity to process stored crude oil, according to trade reports. Several vessels carrying fuel are also present in Aden port.

“However, the streets of Aden remain highly insecure, with no police presence to maintain order. Various armed groups continue to clash, and militant groups are increasingly visible and active. On October 6, four suicide bombings claimed by an affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) targeted government officials and coalition forces in Aden, killing 15 people. The attacks occurred at the Al Qasr Hotel and Resort—which Yemeni officials were using as a headquarters—and facilities in use by Saudi and Emirati soldiers and the Emirati Red Crescent. The attacks marked a turning point, as previous ISIL attacks in Yemen have largely targeted al-Houthis and other Shiites, including suicide bombings in Sana'a that killed more than 30 people in late September and early October. The presence of militant actors is anticipated to continue in Aden, adding another layer of complexity to Yemen's ongoing crisis.”⁶⁷

6.5.15 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported:

Some 4,493 civilians were killed or injured by explosive weapons in Yemen during the first seven months of 2015. This is more than in any other country, according to the new report 'State of Crisis: Explosive Weapons in Yemen',

⁶⁴ UNOCHA / Action on Armed Violence, [State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen](#), p3, September 2015, accessed 14 October 2015

⁶⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, [World Factbook, Yemen](#), Population (based on US Bureau of the Census estimates), updated 6 October 2015, accessed on 15 October 2015

⁶⁶ BBC News: Middle East: 'No hope – A week in the life of Yemen's suffering civilians' 30 September 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34385990> date accessed 2 October 2015

⁶⁷ International Medical Corps: 'Yemen External Situation Report #28, 8 October 2015' <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-external-situation-report-28-october-8-2015> date accessed 28 October 2015

produced by OCHA and UK-based charity Action on Armed Violence (AOAV). Ninety-five per cent of people killed or injured by explosive weapons in populated areas were civilians. More than half (53 per cent) of the reported civilian toll was recorded in Sana'a and surrounding districts. Explosive weapons can be air launched, ground launched or improvised explosive devices. The report indicates that since the conflict began, hundreds of civilian homes and infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed by explosive weapons, and civilians have been driven from their homes. In the report, OCHA and AOAV urge all parties to the conflict to heed the call by the United Nations Secretary-General to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. The report's author, Robert Perkins, said: "An already vulnerable population is now faced with a country reduced to rubble by falling bombs and rockets. Their homes destroyed, their families torn apart, it will take many years to recover from the last few terrible months in Yemen."⁶⁸

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7. Humanitarian situation

7.1.1 Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East. Poverty is widespread, with 47% of the population living on less than US\$2 (about £1.50) a day. Even before the current political crisis, Yemen had significant humanitarian needs, with over 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Yemen.⁶⁹

7.2 Impact of violence

7.2.1 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported reported on 19 June 2015 that:

"Conflict in Yemen since March 2015 has had a devastating impact on the lives of all Yemeni people and migrants and refugees. The Yemeni people are resilient, but their coping mechanisms have been stretched by years of instability, poor governance, lack of rule of law and widespread poverty. Before the recent intensification of conflict, almost half of all Yemenis lived below the poverty line, two-thirds of Yemeni youth were unemployed and basic social services were on the verge of collapse. Years of internal conflict, endemic poverty and weak institutions had left 61% of Yemen's population in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. That number has now increased to 80% as a result of conflict and a drastic reduction in commercial imports."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ United Nations OCHA: Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin No.3, 3 – 29 September 2015 published 30 September 2015

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/yemen/document/yemen-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-3> date accessed 28 October 2015

⁶⁹ Department for International Development (DFID) from 'Governance in Developing Countries' – 'Yemen: Background Information' Published 15 March 2012

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214230/yemen-background-info.pdf Date accessed: 02 July 2015

⁷⁰ Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan - 2015 Revision (June 2015) published 19 June 2015

7.2.2 On 23 June 2015 UNOCHA reported that: “Armed conflict has spread rapidly across much of Yemen since mid-March 2015, with devastating consequences for civilians. An estimated 21.1 million people in Yemen – 80% of the population - now require humanitarian assistance. This is a 33% increase in the number of people in need since late 2014 (15.9 million people). Over one million people have been internally displaced and need emergency shelter and essential household items, as do an additional 200,000 vulnerable host community members.⁷¹

7.2.3 The UNOCHA provided a snapshot of the humanitarian situation as of 20 July 2015:

- 21.1m People in need of assistance - 80 per cent of the population.
- 11.7m Targeted for assistance in 2015.
- 1,267,590 Internally displaced people (IDPs).
- 3,748 Registered deaths resulting from conflict.
- 18,003 Registered injuries resulting from conflict.⁷²

7.2.4 The UNOCHA report continued:

“People across the country are struggling to access food, fuel and medicine. Drastically reduced imports have limited the availability of these commodities, and the lack of fuel – coupled with ongoing fighting and insecurity – is preventing available supplies from being distributed to the people who need them most. Basic services are collapsing all over the country. Nationwide, millions of people no longer have access to clean water, proper sanitation or basic healthcare. Outbreaks of deadly communicable diseases – including dengue and malaria – have already been reported. Supplies for acute trauma care are running dangerously low, and medicines for chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and hypertension have already run out.

“Additional supplies of medicines and food as well as fuel to generate electricity, pump water, operate hospital generators and mill food grains, are urgently needed. Continued hostilities are generating displacement inside and outside the country, and at the same time, there have been new arrivals to Yemen of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.⁷³

<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2015-revision-june-2015-enar>

Date Accessed: 3 July 2015

⁷¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview: (revised version) 23 June 2015

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen%20Humanitarian%20Needs%20Overview%202015%20%28Revised%29.pdf> Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

⁷² OCHA, Yemen: Humanitarian Emergency Situation Report No. 16 (as of 20 July 2015), 20 July 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-emergency-situation-report-no-16-20-july-2015>

⁷³ Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan - 2015 Revision (June 2015) published 19 June 2015

<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2015-revision-june-2015-enar>
Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

7.2.5 The UN OCHA reported on 15 October 2015, that:

“...Damage to hospitals and health facilities across the country has increased at alarming rates. WHO estimates that at least 51 hospitals or health facilities have been damaged or partially destroyed over the past six months. These attacks have injured or killed patients as well as health staff, and led to the depletion of supplies and services. Lack of staff salaries and fuel are also contributing to hospital and health facility closures and to limited health services.

“The destruction of health facilities has severely affected access to life-saving medical assistance and nutrition treatment in an already fragile health system. Presently, one private hospital in Sa’ada governorate is the main source of emergency and long-term care to over 1 million people. In Taizz governorate, which has a population of 3.2 million people, no public hospitals are functioning and the few private health facilities available are operating at limited capacity.

“UNFPA estimates that there are half a million pregnant women in Yemen. Their limited access to health services leaves more than 73,000 women at risk of maternal death. A number that is expected to rise as the capacity of and access to health care diminishes across the country.”⁷⁴

7.3 Displacement and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

7.3.1 The Tony Blair Faith Foundation published a report on 18 September 2014, entitled "resolving displacement essential for long-term peace and stability". The report identified three main conflict hubs in Yemen that created 334,626 total estimated internally displaced persons from a population total of 26 million.

7.3.2 The report stated:

‘Of these conflict hubs, one is in the North where the Houthi movement has clashed with government and government-backed tribal militias since 2004; another is in the Central and Southern regions, where civil protests against (now former) President Ali Abdullah Saleh beginning in 2011 caused intermittent but intense fighting between rival factions for control of the capital, Sana’a; the third is in the South where Ansar al-Sharia, an affiliate of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, took advantage of civil unrest in the capital to seize territory (much of which the group has since lost but central government control remains weak). Natural disasters ranging from drought to floods, landslides and earthquakes increase the hardships of IDPs as well as adding to their numbers.

‘Yemen already ranks near the bottom of humanitarian and economic indices, but IDPs are especially vulnerable. Issues include access to shelter, water, food, nutrition, sanitation, education and healthcare. Food, water and nutrition scarcity is exacerbated by the widespread cultivation of Khat, a mild

⁷⁴ UNOCHA: Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin #4 published 15 October 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-4-issued-15-october-2015> date accessed 28 October 2015

narcotic consumed widely in the country. Aid workers have also noted a worrying trend whereby IDPs who return or would like to return home find an inhospitable environment, continued violence or even less public services available in their own communities than in camps and host communities. As a result, some who did return home have again become IDPs.”⁷⁵

7.3.3 The UNOCHA reported that:

‘The districts most heavily impacted by the conflict are concentrated in Aden, Sa’ada, Hajjah, Abyan, Al Dhale’e, Lahj, Taizz and Sana’a. Large-scale internal displacement began in Lahj and Al Dhale’e in late March 2015 as armed clashes escalated in the South, eventually forcing nearly 250,000 people from their homes and into neighbouring areas. As airstrikes and shelling intensified in the North in April and May 2015, mass displacement was observed primarily in Sa’ada, Amran and Hajjah governorates. On 30 March 2015, a pre-existing IDP camp in Hajjah was struck, dispersing most of the camp population of 16,000 and thousands more from the surrounding area. Large-scale displacement was reported in Sa’ada in the wake of heavy airstrikes on 8-9 May 2015, following a warning that the entire governorate would be considered a military zone.

“There has also been significant displacement from Sana’a, Taiz City and surrounding districts. Partners in the South report that residents have largely abandoned several districts of Aden due to ongoing clashes, and Abyan has received a steady stream of IDPs from Aden, Lahj and Al Dhale’e. IDPs are mostly being hosted in Al Dhale’e (24 per cent), Hajjah (21 per cent), Ibb (7 per cent), Amran (6 per cent) and Abyan (5 per cent). These estimates are based on consolidation of individual partners’ reports; current estimates for Sa’ada, Sana’a, Amanat Al Asimah (Sana’a City) and Aden are believed to be low.”⁷⁶

7.3.4 According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) in their report ‘Yemen IDP Figures Analysis’:

‘As of July 2015, IDMC estimates that there were nearly 1,267,600 internally displaced people in Yemen.

“The current peak in displacement is due to the renewed outbreak of conflict in Yemen between the al Houthi movement and Yemeni security forces, as well as their respective allied forces. The new displacement crisis increases the complexity of the wider internal displacement situation in the country. The latter has primarily occurred as the result of previous rounds of conflict between the parties, which began in 2004 with isolated clashes in Sa’ada. Over the years, the conflict has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes and has spread further, despite a number of ceasefires and

⁷⁵ Tony Blair Faith Foundation Report: ‘Resolving displacement essential for long-term peace and stability’ published 18 September 2014 <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/reports-analysis/report/plight-internally-displaced-persons-yemen> Date Accessed: 17 July 2015

⁷⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview published 23 June 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=qXMkUBUSIP0bdaiEiBB9UXQXliWWW7MIGopaXOvGaf8>, Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

the movement's participation in peace talks. Secondly, in 2011 violence linked to the political unrest in the country also caused internal displacement, particularly in and around the capital Sana'a. In 2012 most people uprooted by the unrest managed to return, although many were in need of support to secure a durable solution. Thirdly, clashes between pro-government factions and the Islamic militant group Ansar al-Sharia for control of the governorate of Abyan in southern Yemen had over 200,000 people displaced between May 2011 and June 2012.

"After the end of this conflict, overall security improved and IDPs started to return. However, Islamist forces, particularly those linked to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), remain an active threat and continue to exploit the power vacuum created by the conflict between the al Houthi movement and the government allied forces.

"In the absence of a political solution to the conflict, IDPs' dire humanitarian ramifications are expected to deteriorate further and their prospects to return or to find another durable solution remain distant."⁷⁷

7.4 Food and water

7.4.1 The UNOCHA report continued:

"Approximately 12.3 million Yemenis are now food insecure, including 6 million who are severely food insecure, up 15.7% since March 2015. Active conflict has contributed to difficulties in distributing commercial food supplies or cut families' access to markets, while severe declines in fuel and food imports are also driving the increase in food insecurity. Basic food commodities are now only sporadically available in a majority of governorates, and wheat prices are up by an average of 43 per cent, and by over 75 per cent in Aden and Al Dhale'e. Even before the crisis, 42% of household expenditure went towards food. Although Yemen reportedly has enough commercial wheat stocks to last three months, shortages and rising fuel prices – mainly a result of declining imports – are crippling commercial distribution. Milling of grains into flour has also stopped in all locations due to fuel shortages. Partners estimate that food transfers in April from Al Hudaydah port to 16 governorates were only one-fourth the normal level.

"Yemen depends enormously on commercial food and fuel imports to meet its basic needs. Over 90% of food is imported, and the country was using an estimated 544,000 metric tons of fuel per month before the crisis. Import restrictions and conflict have reduced imports to a small fraction of pre-crisis levels. The result has been widespread shortages in food, fuel, water and other basic supplies. Fuel – essential to distribute commodities, pump water and power generators in hospitals – is now over four times more expensive than before the conflict, pushing food and water prices out of reach for many families. Yemen depends on commercial networks to distribute commodities to local communities, but insecurity and fuel shortages are severely

⁷⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): 'Yemen IDP Figures Analysis', last updated July 2015, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/figures-analysis>. Date Accessed: 17 July 2015.

hindering distribution. Transporters are reluctant to serve some conflict-affected areas due to interference by parties to the conflict, while fuel shortages are undermining distribution to areas transporters would be otherwise willing to serve.

“Basic food commodities are now only sporadically available in a majority of governorates, and wheat prices are up by an average of 43 per cent, and by over 75 per cent in Aden and Al Dhale’e. Even before the crisis, 42% of household expenditure went towards food. Although Yemen reportedly has enough commercial wheat stocks to last three months, shortages and rising fuel prices – mainly a result of declining imports – are crippling commercial distribution. Milling of grains into flour has also stopped in all locations due to fuel shortages. Partners estimate that food transfers in April from Al Hudaydah port to 16 governorates were only one fourth the normal level.

“Availability of water – already a major problem in the world’s seventh most water-scarce country – has diminished rapidly. An estimated 20.4 million people in Yemen now require humanitarian assistance to access safe drinking water and sanitation, including 9.4 million whose access to water has been cut or severely disrupted due to fuel shortages. Local water corporations are struggling to secure fuel supplies to power piped networks. Commercial water trucks – the main source of water for many communities – are reportedly between two and four times more expensive and have stopped serving some areas entirely due to insecurity.

“These developments are especially affecting people who were not connected to piped networks before the conflict. Conflict related damage to WASH infrastructure may have affected up to 1.5 million people. Some damage has been repaired by local water corporations, often with support of humanitarian partners. However, access restrictions have prevented repairs in all areas. Sewage treatment in Sana’a and Sa’ada is only partially operational and at risk in other cities, while solid waste collection has largely stopped. Partners estimate that these conditions are placing between 1.8 million and 2.5 million children at risk of diarrhoea and between 800,000 and 1.3 million children at risk of acute respiratory infections.’⁷⁸

7.5 Health

7.5.1 The United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) reported, on 27 May 2015:

‘Almost 8.6 million people are in urgent need of medical help. WHO was able to dispatch almost 48 tonnes of medicine into the country during the 5-day ceasefire earlier this month, serving some 400 000 people. This is vastly insufficient - and people continue to suffer not only from war-related injuries, but from inability to get basic treatment for the most common health conditions, or get obstetric care during childbirth.

⁷⁸ UNOCHA: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview date published 23 June 2015 <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen%20Humanitarian%20Needs%20Overview%202015%20%28Revised%29.pdf> date accessed 28 October 2015

“As the conflict continues, more lives are lost every day, not just due to the violence, but as a health system that has been seriously damaged barely copes with the extraordinary needs posed by the unrelenting violent conflict and can no longer provide them with the health services they need to stay alive. The health and lives of millions of people are at risk.

7.5.2 The WHO report continued:

“Hospitals around the country are closing down their emergency operations rooms and intensive care units due to shortages in staff and fuel for generators. Medicines for diabetes, hypertension and cancer are no longer available. The National Tuberculosis Programme has shut down in some areas, and infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever are spreading. Outbreaks of polio and measles are also serious risks.

“Throughout the conflict, there have been widespread violations of international humanitarian law and Geneva conventions for the protection of health facilities, staff and patients. Health infrastructure continues to be hit, with attacks reported on hospitals and ambulances, a medical warehouse, an oxygen factory, and a blood transfusion centre. Some health care workers were killed trying to save lives and more injured.

“This unnecessary loss of innocent lives cannot go on. The health system must be allowed to function unimpeded by the insecurity. All parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, health facilities and health staff during conflict and to permit the supply of vital humanitarian aid, such as medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to areas where it is needed most, and ensure the right to urgently-needed lifesaving health care.⁷⁹

7.5.3 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported:

“Acute malnutrition – already above the 10% emergency threshold nationally – has continued to rise. An estimated 1.5 million children under 5 and pregnant or lactating women require services to treat or prevent acute malnutrition. At least 160 health facilities providing nutrition services have closed due to insecurity, fuel shortages and arrears in staff salaries, affecting a catchment population of 450,000 children under five – including an estimated 15,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.⁸⁰

7.5.4 The same source stated that:

“Health facilities and medical personnel have come under attack and access to healthcare has been severely hampered, at the same time as health needs have spiked. Health facilities and medical personnel have come

⁷⁹ World Health Organisation: ‘Statement on the situation in Yemen’ published 27 May 2015
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2015/yemen-situation/en> Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

⁸⁰ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview published 23 June 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=qXMkUBUSIP0bdaiEiBB9UXQXliWWW7MIGopaXOvGaf8>, Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

under attack and access to healthcare has been severely hampered, at the same time as health needs have spiked. An estimated 15.2 million people now need support to access basic healthcare. Medicines for diabetes, hypertension and cancer are no longer available and there are acute shortages in critical medical supplies – trauma kits, medicines, blood bags and other necessities. Fuel shortages are preventing generators from running, threatening the provision of quality care and jeopardizing cold-chain storage of vaccines and other temperature-sensitive supplies.

“Outbreaks of malaria and dengue fever have been reported in the south and in areas bordering Saudi Arabia. As of 20 May [2015], partners had confirmed seven security incidents affecting health workers – including five deaths and five injuries – and 53 incidents affecting health facilities – including damage, attacks and other harassment. At least 35 health facilities were damaged in this period – including 17 hospitals in Sana’a, Aden, Taizz, Hajjah, Sa’ada, Marib, Shabwah and Amran. On 3 June, the Operations Room of the Ministry of Health in Sana’a, which manages all emergency operations for the entire country, was damaged.⁸¹

7.5.5 On 3 June 2015, the World Health Organization reported that:

“Mass population movement and a failing health system have exposed internally displaced people in Yemen to increased, life-threatening health risks. More than one million internally displaced people have fled the violence to neighbouring governorates. Many of them are housed in public spaces where living conditions are overcrowded and often insanitary. Within schools, for example, some of which host upwards of hundreds of displaced Yemenis, people share a single washroom per gender.

“In Aden governorate, doctors are reporting increasing cases of dengue fever and malaria, as well as growing cases of acute watery diarrhoea due to poor sanitation and limited access to safe water. “As the number of internally displaced persons increase, diseases and infections are spreading rapidly,” said Dr Moheeb Obad, head of the Field Medical Foundation (FMF), a local nongovernmental organization working with WHO and UNICEF to provide primary health care and referral services to internally displaced persons in Aden, Lahj, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa and Abyan governorates.”⁸²

7.5.6 The report continued:

“The health situation in shelters hosting internally displaced people is worrying,” said Dr Ahmed Shadoul, WHO Representative for Yemen.

⁸¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Yemen 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview published 23 June 2015

<http://reliefweb.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=qXMkUBUSIP0bdaiEiBB9UXQXiWWV7MIgopaXOvGaf8>,

Date Accessed: 16 July 2015

⁸² World Health Organisation: ‘Internally Displaced People in Yemen face increasingly critical health risks’ published 3 June 2015 <http://www.emro.who.int/yem/yemen-news/yemenis-face-critical-health-risks.html> Date Accessed: 17 July 2015

“This is exacerbated by a disrupted disease surveillance system due to the insecurity, as well as inadequate access to basic health care services due to shortages in qualified health staff and limited functionality of health facilities.”

In Aden, Abyan, Hodeida, Amran and Sana’a governorates, conditions in shelters have exacerbated the health situation of internally displaced people, especially those suffering from chronic disease such as diabetes, asthma, kidney diseases and hypertension who have limited access to treatment due to reduced health care services and critical shortages in essential medicines.

“Thousands of internally displaced people in Hajja governorate are overloading the local health system”. Dr Khaled Al-Nadheri, Deputy Director of the Health Office in Hajja governorate, told WHO that Al-Jamhuri Hospital, the only public hospital in the governorate, is barely functional.

“Many of the internally displaced people are women and children, including a large number of pregnant and lactating women and malnourished children in need of urgent support,” said Dr Al-Nadheri. Health partners on the ground in Taiz governorate are reporting that health facilities are overburdened by large numbers of internally displaced people and Khalefa hospital reporting zero stocks of medicines in its supply store.

“WHO is working with partners to support the health needs of internally displaced people throughout the country with mobile health teams, safe water supplies, sanitation services, and medicines and medical supplies. But much more needs to be done, and this can only happen if health facilities remain fully functional, if health staff and disease surveillance officers are able to report to work safely, and if medicines and medical supplies are able to reach areas where they are needed most,” said Dr Shadoul.”⁸³

7.5.7 Medicine Without Frontiers reported on their website that:

“MSF Emergency surgical hospital in Aden has started receiving an increased number of landmine & unexploded ordinance (UXO) victims, especially children (more than 35 cases since the second week of August).

“We have been able to send in 390 tonnes of medical supplies and staff (including emergency medical teams) by sea and air, but more is needed.

“A fuel blockade is still crippling the country. The standard price for fuel is 150YR/litre but it’s price on the black market varies between 450YR and 750YR. This places a huge strain on the general population for moving anywhere, and has caused an increase in food and water costs throughout the country, and hospitals have inadequate provision of diesel to keep their generators running. Sana’a remains without city power consistently since early April. Populations who do not live in direct proximity to health structures no longer have any means of transport to access healthcare.

“It remains extremely difficult to move within the country to assess the needs and deploy assistance, due to fighting and air-strikes.

⁸³ World Health Organisation: ‘Internally Displaced People in Yemen face increasingly critical health risks’ published 3 June 2015 <http://www.emro.who.int/yem/yemen-news/yemenis-face-critical-health-risks.html> Date Accessed: 17 July 2015

“Large civilian populations remain in towns and villages in Sa’ada and north Amran governorates, near the Saudi border. Many health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, medical staff have fled, and transport is extremely challenging due to high fuel prices and insecurity on the roads.

“The situation in Taiz is tense with air-strikes and ground fighting between Houthis and southern resistance is heavier than ever. The frontlines are changing every day. MSF has not been able to supply its supported hospital of Al-Rawdah or hospitals on both. MSF is unable to get authorization to give medical supply to these hospitals. Health structures are under fire. Out of 20 major medical infrastructures in Taiz governorate, 16 are closed and the remaining hospitals are overloaded. And out of eight urban women and children health centres, six are totally closed and only one is functional but not running fully because of the lack of fuel.

“In September, the Saudi-led coalition targeted several locations in the capital Sana’a, one of which was the Central Security that is opposite to Al-Sabeen Hospital. The hospital was evacuated soon as the premises were affected. The patients were sent to other hospitals in the city. The main Blood Bank in Sana’a is located in Al-Sabeen Hospital. MSF donated 3,000 blood bags.⁸⁴

7.5.8 MSF also stated, in relation to the city of Aden:

“MSF is running an Emergency Surgical Hospital in Sheikh Othman district, in the north of the city. Mass casualties due to fierce fighting, air raids and shelling have been frequent in July. Since the Southern Resistance forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition regained control of the town and the frontline moved northwards. 204 war wounded were received on 19 July, 167 on 25 July and 111 the next day. Since the beginning of 2015, MSF received 5,978 patients in the emergency room and performed more than 3,776 surgical interventions. Since 19 March, MSF received 5,522 war wounded. MSF is also providing mental health care and physiotherapy in the hospital. MSF has been receiving more patients from Lahj and Abyan governorates recently. Victims of landmines and unexploded ordnances have been increasing since early August MSF received more than 35 victims, mostly children.

“In the south of the city, MSF started on 20 April running an advanced emergency post. In the Crater Health Center, MSF staff is working 24/7 providing trauma care, medication and fuel for the power generator. More than 1,232 wounded patients have been received in the emergency room. Out of these, 215 have been referred to other hospitals for further treatment after initial stabilization. In May MSF started outpatient surgical mobile clinics in Enma and later in As-Sha’b district to provide outpatient care to surgical patients who could not access MSF hospital. More than 1,220 war

⁸⁴ Medicine Without Frontiers: Yemen: Crisis Update: Overview 23 September 2015
<http://www.msf.org/article/yemen-crisis-update-%E2%80%9315-september-2015> Date accessed 2 October 2015

wounded have been provided surgical follow-up consultations and wound dressings.”⁸⁵

7.6 Humanitarian access

7.6.1 The UNOCHA reported on 13 July 2015 that:

‘For the first time since the escalation of violence, humanitarian ships berthed in Al Mukalla, Hadramaut carrying food, WASH and medical supplies.

‘A UN multi-agency aid convoy of 19 trucks entered Aden with 356.5 MT of medical equipment, vaccines, basic cooking supplies and hygiene items, which will benefit more than half a million people.

Lack of funding for humanitarian activities is preventing a much needed scale up of humanitarian efforts.⁸⁶

7.6.2 For a map of humanitarian access, see

<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-access-constraints-and-people-targeted-humanitarian-assistance-7-july-2015> and also [Annex A](#) for a list of sources providing updated maps on the situation in Yemen.

7.6.3 On 21 July 2015, BBC reported that a UN ship, carrying 4,700 tonnes of food supplies - enough to feed 180,000 people for a month - as well as pharmaceutical aid had docked in Yemen's southern city of Aden for the first time since fighting broke out there in March⁸⁷

7.6.4 On 3 August 2015, the Yemen News Agency Saba also reported that “A planeload of relief aid of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) landed in Sana'a on Monday. The plane carried 23 tons of medical and humanitarian assistance, an ICRC official said at the airport”⁸⁸

7.6.5 The UNHCR Regional Update #18, for the reporting period 6 – 12 August 2015, reported that the World Food Programme delivered a 2-month ration of rice, sugar, pulses and oil to Kharaz camp. However, wheat flour (part of standard rations) did not arrive as trucks were held back by road blocks. Emergency supplies were distributed by Red Crescent, but only for 104 families. A further 73 families were given emergency relief items by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Medicine Without Frontiers: Yemen: Crisis Update: Overview 23 September 2015
<http://www.msf.org/article/yemen-crisis-update-%E2%80%93-15-september-2015> Date accessed 2 October 2015

⁸⁶ Yemen: Humanitarian emergency situation report no. 15 13 July 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-emergency-situation-report-no-15-13-july-2015-enar> date accessed 3 November 2015

⁸⁷ BBC, ‘Yemen: First UN aid ship in four months reaches Aden’, 21 July 2015,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33616171>. Date Accessed: 4 August 2015.

⁸⁸ Yemen News Agency (Saba), ‘ICRC aid plane arrives in Sana'a’, 3 August 2015,
<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news400923.htm>. Date Accessed: 4 August 2015.

⁸⁹ UNHCR: Yemen Situation – UNHCR Regional Update #18 published August 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Yemen%20Situation%20Update%20%2318%20-%2006-12AUG15.pdf> Date accessed 21 August 2015

7.6.6 The BBC reported (20 August 2015) that (despite Aden having been liberated by government troops in July 2015):

“Although the fighting is over, the humanitarian situation in Aden remains dire. Pro-government forces have driven out the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels but the people are in desperate need. Many of the residential neighbourhoods have been reduced to ruins and thousands of Yemenis are still living in schools and mosques, with little access to food, water or medicine. There is no sign they are going to return home any time soon.

“A lot of areas around the city are full of landmines and explosive devices. One lady told me her neighbour went back to check his house after the fighting stopped, but the moment he opened the door an explosion was triggered. She said she doesn't want to face the same fate. As we walked around Aden, we saw some neighbourhoods overflowing with sewage water. Parents say their children are suffering from malaria, diarrhoea and skin diseases. Hospitals are overwhelmed with war casualties who don't receive adequate medical treatment. Many die on their way to the medical facilities because ambulances are poorly equipped. Doctors say many victims need to be taken abroad because their conditions are too serious to be treated in Yemen.”⁹⁰

7.6.7 The UNOCHA reported on 29 September 2015:

‘In the first two weeks of September, food imports increased into Al Hudaydah and Aden, Yemen’s two main ports, compared with the previous two weeks. However, commercial fuel imports, upon which Yemen is dependent, have not entered the country since mid- August.

‘An average of 4.1 million metric tons (MT) of food was imported into Yemen each year during 2013 and 2014, according to the Yemen Food Security Information System Development Programme, implemented by FAO and the Food Security Technical Secretariat of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. On average, 171,000 MT of food was imported every two weeks. Data recorded by OCHA shows an increase in food imports to 160,000 MT during the period 1 to 15 September, from 111,000 MT from 16 to 31 August. The number of ships berthing at Aden and Hudaydah ports increased from 11 to 17 for the same period, but food imports have yet to reach precrisis levels.

‘Hudaydah port was badly damaged by air strikes during August, but it can accept bulk cargo and containerized cargo from ships equipped with cranes to offload. It will cost an estimated US\$87 million to replace the damaged cranes and deploy equipment to fully re-establish the port infrastructure. Transport of cargo from Aden and Hudaydah ports to other parts of Yemen remains challenging, as many road networks remain inaccessible or difficult to access due to damage and continued violence.’⁹¹

⁹⁰ BBC News: ‘Yemen Crisis: Famine threatens war-torn country, warns UN’ 20 August 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33998006> Date accessed 30 September 2015

⁹¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin No.3 published 29 September 2015 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-bulletin-no-3-29-september-2015-enar>

8. Freedom of movement

8.1.1 The US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Yemen – 2014, reported:

“The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights, with some restrictions. Prior to September 2014 the government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organisations in providing protection and assistance to IDPs, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. Houthi presence, however, made it difficult for UNHCR’s implementing partners to reach many areas of the country due to security concerns.

“According to the UNHCR, the country’s laws and policies were consistent with international standards, but the government’s capacity to protect and assist persons in need was limited. The government’s ability to provide services in some parts of the country was weak, since it focused limited resources on maintaining stability during the political transition.

“The government at times restricted domestic travel by refusing to issue travel permits to conflict areas, and the army, security forces, and tribesmen maintained checkpoints on major roads. In many regions, especially in areas outside effective central security control, armed tribesmen frequently restricted freedom of movement, operating their own checkpoints, sometimes with military or other security officials, and often subjecting travellers to physical harassment, extortion, theft, or short-term kidnappings for ransom. The number of non-government checkpoints increased in many governorates as central government control in those areas weakened.

“Social discrimination severely restricted women’s freedom of movement. Women in general did not enjoy full freedom of movement, although restrictions varied by location. Some observers reported increased restrictions on women in conservative locations where government control was weaker or absent, such as Sa’ada. Security officials at government checkpoints often required immigrants and refugees travelling within the country to show they possessed resident status or refugee identification cards. At times local officials reportedly did not honour official documents.

“The law requires women to have the permission of a husband or male relative before applying for a passport or leaving the country. A husband or male relative may stop a woman from leaving the country by placing a woman’s name on a “no-fly list” maintained at airports, and authorities strictly enforced this requirement when women travelled with children. The NDC outcomes recommended lifting restrictions on women’s travel. The

government limited the movement of foreigners, who were required to obtain exit visas before leaving the country.”⁹²

8.1.2 Freedom House reported that:

“Freedom of movement, property rights, and business activity are impaired by insecurity and corruption. Many Yemenis rely on migrant work in Persian Gulf countries, where their rights are often precarious. Hundreds of thousands of Yemenis were abruptly deported from Saudi Arabia during a crackdown on foreign workers in 2013.

“Women continue to face discrimination in several aspects of life. A woman must obtain permission from her husband or father to receive a passport and travel abroad, cannot confer citizenship on a foreign-born spouse, and can transfer Yemeni citizenship to their children only in special circumstances.”⁹³

8.1.3 Jane’s reported in July 2015 that:

“Most territory is either under the de facto control of local tribes who traditionally used road blocks to negotiate with the government over security issues and economic benefits, or the Houthi movement, which unilaterally took over the Yemeni government on 6 February 2015. Growing economic pressure on the Houthi-controlled government alongside the ongoing intensification of sectarian conflict presents severe hijacking risks to cargo crossing de facto borders between Houthi and non-Houthi territory. Risks are highest between Sanaa and Ma’rib, and around Hodeidah and Aden, where food and other imports can be controlled.”⁹⁴

8.1.4 More recently, “AEI Critical Threats’ reported that “Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is taking control of more territory in Yemen, both inside and outside of active conflict zones...AQAP is taking advantage of a security vacuum in Aden to strengthen its presence in the city. AQAP militants are a visible presence in al Tawahi, one of the largest districts in Aden.”⁹⁵

8.1.5 The Foreign & Commonwealth travel advice website (still current on 1 October 2015) stated that:

‘Given the current political and security situation, there’s limited government control over parts of the country with Houthi or Al-Qaeda dominance in some areas. Access routes in and out of major cities may be closed or blocked...

⁹² United States State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Yemen – 2014 published 25 June 2014, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236842.pdf> Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

⁹³ Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2015 – Yemen – section ‘Personal autonomy and individual rights’ published 27 February 2015 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/yemen> Date Accessed: 21 July 2015

⁹⁴ Janes, Sentinel Security Risk Assessments, Yemen, Security, 17 July 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1303456> Date Accessed: 23 July 2015

⁹⁵ AEI Critical threats: Yemen Crisis Situation Report: 23 October 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-october-23-2015> date accessed 29 October 2015

'Yemeni air space is currently controlled by Saudi-led coalition forces. Yemenia Airways is operating flights from Sana'a to Amman and has announced a weekly flight from Aden to Khartoum. In order to travel, passengers must register with Yemenia in advance. The airline then has to get approval from the coalition, which can take between 10 and 14 days. Yemenia may charge a US\$ 300 fee in addition to the ticket price for this service. Yemenia hopes to expand outbound flights to Mumbai. Egypt Air has announced it will start flights to and from Cairo and Aden...

'There are no direct cargo or passenger flights between Yemen and the EU. Previous aviation incidents have included a failed attempt to bomb an aircraft destined for the USA, and two explosive devices identified in air cargo originating from Yemen.'

"As part of the coalition response to the Houthi aggression, maritime restrictions are currently in place resulting in variable port and vessel accessibility. Attacks of piracy against vessels in and around the Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin and Indian Ocean are continuing. Sailing and other low-speed vessels are at particular risk, as are shipping vessels which have not adopted agreed industry best practice, including on routing. Maritime terrorism cannot be ruled out."⁹⁶

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⁹⁶ Foreign & Commonwealth Office Travel Advice: Yemen – last updated 26 August 2015
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> Accessed 1 October 2015

Annex A: List of Sources for Updated Information

Given the changeable situation, the following provides updated material against which an assessment of a person's claim can be made.

Security Situation

AEI Critical Threats,

Yemen section: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen> and

Yemen Crisis Situation Reports 2015: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-2015>

For more information about groups active in Yemen, see

IRIN News: <http://www.irinnews.org/country/ye/yemen>

Humanitarian Situation

ICRC

<https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/middle-east/yemen>

MSF

<http://www.msf.org.uk/country-region/yeme>

WHO

<http://www.who.int/hac/crises/yem/en>

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA):

http://reliefweb.int/updates?search=%28+primary_country%3A%22Yemen%22+%29+AND+%28+source%3A%22UN+Office+for+the+Coordination+of+Humanitarian+Affairs%22+%29+AND+%28+format%3A%22Situation+Report%22+OR+ocha_product%3A%22Humanitarian+Bulletin%22+%29

Maps

Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Yemen: Travel & Briefing Notes last updated 30 June 2015: https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/513b8a10e5274a4612000010/120607_Yemen_pdf.pdf

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Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

- version **1.0**
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- this version approved by **Sally Weston, Deputy Director, Head of Legal Strategy Team**.
- approved on: **2 November 2015**

Changes from last version of this guidance

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