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**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS**

# **YEMEN**

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4 APRIL 2007

**RDS-IND**

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE**

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## 1. Preface

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- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) Key Documents has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 28 March 2007.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.
- iii For Home Office users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Yemen is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the key documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional documents are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

### Country of Origin Information Service

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### ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at [www.apci.org.uk](http://www.apci.org.uk).

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fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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## 2. Background information on Yemen

**Full Country Name:** Republic of Yemen

**Area:** 528,000 sq km

**Population:** 20 million (est.)

**Capital City:** Sana'a (1 million est.)

**People:** Arab

**Language:** Arabic

**Religion:** Muslim

**Climate:** Mostly desert, where it is very hot and dry. Hot and humid along the west coast; temperate in western mountains affected by seasonal monsoon

**Currency:** Yemeni Rial

**Major political parties:** General People's Congress (GPC), Islah, Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP)

**Government:** Democracy

**Head of State:** President Ali Abdullah Saleh

**Prime Minister/Premier:** Dr Abdul Qadir Bajammal

**Foreign Minister:** Dr Abu Baker al Qirby

(Information extracted from the FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

### GEOGRAPHY

"Yemen lies at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula and has frontiers with Saudi Arabia and Oman and controls the strategic straits at the Southern entrance to the Red Sea (Bab al Mendab). The north of the country has three well-defined areas: a coastal strip along the Red Sea, the highlands inland and a desert area to the east. The south consists largely of mountains and desert. The population is poor and largely rural, but there has been large-scale urbanisation in the last decade and almost half of the population now live in towns." (FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

### RECENT HISTORY

"The Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), also known as North Yemen, came into being on 26 September 1962 following a military coup which ousted the Imam of the Mutawakkilite. The People's Republic of South Yemen (later known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) was formed on 30 November 1967 from the territory of the former Federation of South Arabia and the Aden Protectorate. The two countries united on 22 May 1990 to form a single nation-state for the first time, The Republic of Yemen (ROY)." (FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

"In May 1994 large scale fighting broke out between military forces supporting the south and those supporting the north following a breakdown in political co-operation. Fighting continued until July when Aden fell. Since then the Government has attempted to promote reconciliation between the north and the south." (FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

### RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In 2005, "Hundreds of people were reportedly killed in Sa'da Province where there were armed clashes between government security forces and followers of cleric Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi. Intense fighting broke out in the area in late March after the authorities launched a search for followers of the cleric, who was killed in September 2004. ... The government also closed hundreds of religious schools within

the Zaidi community and in October ordered the closure of 1,400 charities which it said were contravening the law.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a]

In March 2006, “More than 600 followers of slain Shia cleric Hussein al-Houthi who were captured following a rebellion he led in 2004 are released under an amnesty.” (BBC Timeline, 7 February 2007) [28b] “Ali Abdallah Saleh, Yemen's longest-serving leader in recent times, was re-elected to another seven-year term in September 2006. It was the first time Mr Saleh had faced a serious challenge since coming to power 28 years earlier. The opposition cried foul but international monitors said the vote was fair.” (BBC Country Profile, 2 March 2007) [28a] In the first months of 2007, “Scores are killed or wounded in clashes between security forces and Shia rebels in the north.” (BBC Timeline, 7 February 2007) [28b]

## ECONOMY

“Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East; GDP per capita is less than \$650 per annum, reflecting a weak economy and a rapidly expanding population of almost 20 million people. The oil discovered in 1984 has provided most of Yemen's revenue, though production and reserves are modest and economic diversification remains a key priority. The World Bank and the IMF are advising on the restructuring of the economy and the government has been commended for its bold and often domestically unpopular support for the programme of reforms.” (FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2] “... Yemen faces development challenges across a range of sectors including healthcare, education and water. The Government of Yemen has made significant progress addressing these issues and is implementing policies to reduce poverty, to promote economic growth and reform, and to improve the quality of governance.” (DFID Country Profile, 17 May 2006) [23]

“However, low oil prices in 1998-9 reduced export volumes causing severe economic difficulties for Yemen. In 2005 there was considerable social unrest throughout Yemen, sparked off by rapidly rising fuel and food prices as subsidies were withdrawn in order to meet IMF targets. The increase in oil prices in 1999/2000 boosted Government revenues and export earnings, but coincided with a significant downturn in tourism due to the poor security situation. Corruption, smuggling and insecurity have also damaged investor confidence and the economy is not recovering quickly.” (FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

**GDP:** US\$ 15.9 billion (2005 estimate)

**GDP per head:** US\$ 614

**Annual Growth:** 4.1% (2002)

**Inflation:** 10.9%

**Major Industries:** oil, agriculture

**Major Trading Partners:** India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Thailand, China, South Korea

**Aid & Development:** The Netherlands, Germany, Japan, EC, USA, UK  
(Information extracted from the FCO Country Profile, 21 September 2006) [2]

**Exchange Rate:** British £1 = 352.31 Yemeni Rials, US \$1 = 179.03 Yemeni Rials, as of 23 March 2007. (Oanda.com FXConverter, 23 March 2007) [27a-27b]

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## HUMAN RIGHTS

“Significant human rights problems existed in some areas, such as limitations on citizens’ ability to change their government due to corruption, fraudulent voter registration, and administrative weakness. Torture and poor prison conditions existed in some prisons. Prolonged pre-trial detention and judicial weakness and corruption were also problems. There were some limitations on press freedom. Pervasive corruption within the government, discrimination against women, and instances of child labor and child trafficking occurred.” (USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2006) [6b] “The government continued to forcibly return people to countries where they risked serious human rights violations. Dozens of people were reportedly executed and several hundred people remained under sentence of death.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a]

“Hundreds of people were killed in Sa’da Province amid armed clashes between the security forces and followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a cleric from the Zaidi community. ... More than 1,000 alleged followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi were detained without charge or trial, as were hundreds of people arrested in previous years in the context of the ‘war on terror’. In the rare cases where political prisoners were brought to trial, the proceedings fell far short of international standards.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a] “Continued conflict in the northern region of the country and summer riots over the lifting of fuel subsidies made for a volatile year.” (FH Freedom in the World 2006) [13a]

“Press freedom was further restricted and journalists were frequently attacked by police and others [during 2005].” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a] “Yemen continued to suffer from a crackdown on press freedom at the hands of its government in 2005, with several prominent journalists intimidated, beaten, and arrested by government security forces.” (FH Freedom in the World 2006) [13a]

“Presidential elections provided the backdrop for a series of troubling attacks against Yemen’s increasingly vocal independent and opposition press. As expected, President Ali Abdullah Saleh extended his nearly three decades in power by another six years, but the run-up to the September vote saw an upsurge in violence, intimidation, and legal harassment, along with a smear campaign directed by the state-controlled press against independent journalists. ...

“During the year, the Yemeni parliament debated a press bill that threatened increased restrictions. Government officials touted the measure as a step forward for press freedom because it removed provisions from the 1990 law that stipulated jail terms for purported press offenses. But Yemeni lawyers noted that the change would be irrelevant since journalists would still face jail time under provisions of the country’s penal code. The draft prescribed stiffer professional requirements to practice journalism, including membership in the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, and it stipulated that nonjournalists could not work in the press.” (CPJ Attacks on the Press in 2006) [14]

“The government took several steps to reduce corruption, including removing and investigating several judges accused of malfeasance, passing a financial disclosure law for government officials, and establishing an independent anticorruption authority with civil society representatives.” (USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2006) [6b]

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### 3. Index to key source documents

(KB users - click source number to access document directly)

<b>KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY</b>	[1]	Europa World Online, Country Statistics (accessed on 8 March 2007) <a href="http://www.europaworld.com/pub/">http://www.europaworld.com/pub/</a> ( <i>Subscription</i> )
	[1]	Europa World Online, Location, Climate, Language, Religion, Flag, Capital (accessed on 8 March 2007) <a href="http://www.europaworld.com/pub/">http://www.europaworld.com/pub/</a> ( <i>Subscription</i> )
	[2]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile: Yemen, last reviewed 21 September 2006 <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485</a>
	[3]	United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World fact book: Yemen, last updated 15 March 2007 <a href="https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html">https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html</a>
	[6a]	United States Department of State (USSD) Background Note: Yemen, February 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bqn/35836.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bqn/35836.htm</a>
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, 6 March 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm</a>
	[28a]	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Country Profile: Yemen, updated 2 March 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm</a>
<b>MAP</b>	[4]	United Nations Cartographic Section (UNCS): Yemen, January 2004 <a href="http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/yemen.pdf">http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/yemen.pdf</a>
<b>HISTORY</b>	[1]	Europa World Online, Recent History (8 March 2007) <a href="http://www.europaworld.com/pub/">http://www.europaworld.com/pub/</a> ( <i>Subscription</i> )
	[2]	FCO Country Profile: Yemen, last reviewed 21 September 2006 <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485</a>
	[3]	CIA World fact book: Yemen, last updated last updated 15 March 2007 <a href="https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html">https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html</a>
	[6a]	United States Department of State (USSD) Background Note: Yemen, February 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bqn/35836.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bqn/35836.htm</a>
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, 6 March 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm</a>



<b>HISTORY CONT...</b>	[13a]	Freedom House (FH) Freedom in the World 2006: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090</a>
	[28a]	BBC Country Profile: Yemen, updated 2 March 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm</a>
	[28b]	BBC Timeline: Yemen, updated 7 February 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/1706450.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/1706450.stm</a>
<b>POLITICS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS</b>	[1]	Europa World Online, Government and Politics (accessed on 8 March 2007) <a href="http://www.europaworld.com/pub/">http://www.europaworld.com/pub/</a> ( <i>Subscription</i> )
	[2]	FCO Country Profile: Yemen, last reviewed 21 September 2006 <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485</a>
	[5a]	Constitution of Yemen, 1991 <a href="http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html">http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html</a>
	[5b]	Constitution of Yemen, 1994 <a href="http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/con94.htm">http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/con94.htm</a>
	[6a]	United States Department of State (USSD) Background Note: Yemen, February 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35836.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35836.htm</a>
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, 6 March 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm</a>
	[7]	Jane's Information Group (Jane's) Country Profile: Yemen, last updated 15 March 2007 <a href="http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/GULFS_country.jsp?Prod_Name=GULFS&amp;Sent_Country=Yemen&amp;">http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/GULFS_country.jsp?Prod_Name=GULFS&amp;Sent_Country=Yemen&amp;</a> ( <i>Subscription</i> )
	[8a]	United Nations Development Programme – Human Development Report (UNDP-HDR) 2006: Yemen Fact sheet <a href="http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_YEM.html">http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_YEM.html</a>
	[8b]	United Nations Development Programme – Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (UNDP-POGAR): Yemen in Brief, undated <a href="http://www.pogar.org/countries/country.asp?cid=22">http://www.pogar.org/countries/country.asp?cid=22</a>
	[9a]	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU): Information on the Majlis Annwab (House of Representatives) <a href="http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2353.htm">http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2353.htm</a>
	[9b]	IPU: Information on the Majlis Alshoora (Consultative Council) <a href="http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2354.htm">http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2354.htm</a>
	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) Annual Report 2006 <a href="http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng">http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng</a>

<p><b>POLITICS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONT...</b></p>	<p>[13a] [13c] [28a] [28b]</p>	<p>FH Freedom in the World 2006: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090</a></p> <p>FH Countries at the Crossroads 2005: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143</a></p> <p>BBC Country Profile: Yemen, updated 2 March 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/784383.stm</a></p> <p>BBC Timeline: Yemen, updated 7 February 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/1706450.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/1706450.stm</a></p>
<p><b>HUMAN RIGHTS - GENERAL:</b></p>	<p>[2] [5a] [5b] [6b] [7] [11a] [13a] [13c] [17]</p>	<p>FCO Country Profile: Yemen, last reviewed 21 September 2006 <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019829189485</a></p> <p>Constitution of Yemen, 1991 <a href="http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html">http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html</a></p> <p>Constitution of Yemen, 1994 <a href="http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/con94.htm">http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/gov/con94.htm</a></p> <p>USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, 6 March 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm</a></p> <p>Jane's Country Profile: Yemen, last updated 15 March 2007 <a href="http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/GULFS_country.jsp?Prod_Name=GULFS&amp;Sent_Country=Yemen&amp;(Subscription)">http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/GULFS_country.jsp?Prod_Name=GULFS&amp;Sent_Country=Yemen&amp;(Subscription)</a></p> <p>AI Annual Report 2006 <a href="http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng">http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng</a></p> <p>FH Freedom in the World 2006: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090</a></p> <p>FH Countries at the Crossroads 2005: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143</a></p> <p>International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Annual Report 2005 <a href="http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6PPE2J/\$FILE/icrc_ar_05_yemen.pdf?OpenElement">http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6PPE2J/\$FILE/icrc_ar_05_yemen.pdf?OpenElement</a></p>

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<b>HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC ISSUES:</b>		
<b>(IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)</b>		
<b>ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENT FORCES</b>	<b>[6b]</b>	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, 6 March 2007 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78867.htm</a>
	<b>[11a]</b>	AI Annual Report 2006 <a href="http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng">http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/yem-summary-eng</a>
	<b>[12]</b>	State and Non-State Justice in Yemen, 10-14 December 2006 <a href="http://www.usip.org/ruleoflaw/projects/zwaini_paper.pdf">http://www.usip.org/ruleoflaw/projects/zwaini_paper.pdf</a>
	<b>[13a]</b>	FH Freedom in the World 2006: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7090</a>
	<b>[13c]</b>	FH Countries at the Crossroads 2005: Yemen <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&amp;edition=7&amp;ccrpage=31&amp;ccrcountry=143</a>
	<b>[17]</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Annual Report 2005 <a href="http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6PPE2J/\$FILE/icrc_ar_05_yemen.pdf?OpenElement">http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6PPE2J/\$FILE/icrc_ar_05_yemen.pdf?OpenElement</a>
	<b>[18]</b>	Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC) Global Report 2004 <a href="http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=956">http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=956</a>
<b>ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS</b>	<b>[5a]</b>	Constitution of Yemen, 1991 <a href="http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html">http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ym00000_.html</a>
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