

**Report on the Use of Landmines by Houthi
and Saleh Militias in the provinces of:
Aden, Lahej, Abyan, Aldhalea and Mareb**



التحالف اليمني لرصد
انتهاكات حقوق الانسان

Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring
Human Rights Violations



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Executive Summary:

This report sheds light on one manifestation of war crimes committed by Houthi and Saleh Militias in Yemen. It is the crime of using landmines, which is considered to be one of the most dangerous indiscriminate and banned weapons. Based on well-documented field visits, this report covers the period from July to November 2015 in five Yemeni provinces, namely; Aden, Abyan, Lahej, Aldhalea and Mareb following the liberation of these provinces from Houthi-Saleh Militias.

In the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahej and Aldhalea, Houthi-Saleh Militias have planted hundreds of anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines. This report demonstrates that these militias did not comply with even the minimum legal and ethical obligations during their military operations under war laws and norms and under the provisions of international humanitarian law banning the use of anti-personnel land mines. Moreover, it has been proven that Houthi-Saleh militias have planted land mines in densely populated areas and neighborhoods such as the case of the city of Crater in Aden or the city of Mareb. In addition, the report documents in some cases that these militias have planted land mines inside residential houses far away from any military targets or at the doorsteps of the houses of internally displaced people for the purpose of killing them as they return back.

Houthi-Saleh militias have invented new ways to using anti-tank landmines and converting them into anti-personnel land mines for the purposes of inflicting as much killing and damage as possible to people and assets. During the period from July 2015 until mid-November, land mines have killed no less than one-hundred people and injured more than 150 others including women and children in the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Mareb, Lahej and Aldhalea as confirmed by the data collected by the field monitoring team working under the Yemen Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations.

Houthi-Saleh militias have used anti-tank and anti-personnel land mines made in some East European countries and the Soviet Union which manufacturing dates go back to the 1980s. This is despite the fact that Yemen has ratified, in September 1998, the Landmine Ban Convention 1997 and it became effective in March 1999. The Landmine Ban Convention obligates state parties to refrain from using anti-personnel landmines under any circumstances.

Following seizing control of the Yemeni Capital Sana'a and dominating all institutions of the Yemeni state by force in late 2014 and early 2015 by Houthi-Saleh militias, incoming information indicated that armed groups affiliated to Houthis have controlled the Executive Landmine Action Center in the Capital City of Sana'a and ransacked all its contents. In addition, these militias have confiscated the depots of weapons of the Yemeni Armed Forces and used all these assets to supply and fund their attacks against people in provinces that resisted these militias.

According to initial field survey reports, Houthi-Saleh militias have left, in all areas they withdraw from, enormous quantities of anti-personnel landmines, anti-tank landmines and improvised explosive devices, which explode if any person becomes close or in contact with them. These are covered by the definition of banned anti-personnel landmines pursuant to the Landmine Ban Convention.

The number of landmines, of different kinds, removed by national army and local resistance with help from Arab Coalition Forces in the five provinces exceeded 5000 landmines.

Introduction of the report:

Human rights situation in Yemen in late 2014 was not in its best shape as Houthi militias with support from dissident government forces loyal to former president Ali Saleh swept into Amran province in July of 2014 before they seize control of the Capital City of Sana'a on 21 December 2014. These militias then continued their wars in more than 15 Yemeni provinces resulting in the complete collapse of the already fragile infrastructure of the Yemeni state institutions, particularly law enforcement institutions.

As Houthi militias and Saleh forces swept into cities, the humanitarian situation in Yemen sharply deteriorated with the stoppage of most basic services and a complete lack of petroleum products, electricity and other services. As reported by humanitarian organizations, more than 21 million Yemenis are in need of assistance.

As Houthi-Saleh militias attacked the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahej and Aldhalea by the end of March 2015, the situation of human rights and the humanitarian situation declined dramatically reaching to very serious levels, as reported by the UN Office for Coordinating Humanitarian Affairs.

Military operations of Houthi-Saleh militias in the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahej and Aldhalea in south Yemen resulted in massive destruction in the infrastructure and private houses before these militias withdraw in mid-July 2015 as a result of the people's resistance supported with air strikes from Arab Coalition Forces led by Saudi Arabia.

In October of the same year, with support from national army units loyal to the legitimate government and an aerial cover from Arab Coalition Forces, the people's resistance in the oil-rich province of Mareb east Yemen liberated large swaths of land in that province.

However, the liberation of this province from the grip of Houthi-Saleh militias quickly turned the page of new chapters of the misery left by these militias. Before their retreat, Houthi-Saleh militias planted hundreds of anti-personnel, anti-tank

landmines and explosive devices on public roads, areas and neighborhoods that did not witness any confrontations nor they are considered as military positions with the aim of going deep in killing as much innocents and civilians as possible.

Landmines, remnant unexploded ordnance and explosive devices planted by Houthi-Saleh militias during their control of the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahej, Aldhalea and Mareb continue to claim the lives of dozens of people in these areas and destroying the life and livelihoods of others.

This report sheds light on some aspects of this situation, the effects resulting from the use of this type of indiscriminate weapons and the refusal of Houthi-Saleh militias to hand over the maps of landmines they planted in accordance with the laws of armed conflict.

Methodology of the report:

This report is based on field research conducted by field monitoring teams consisting of lawyers, human rights activists and journalists under the oversight of the Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations, which includes major human rights organizations during the period from August until the end of November 2015 in the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahej, Aldhalea and Mareb following the retreat of Houthi-Saleh militias from these areas as these areas became under the control of the national army supported by the people's resistance.

Using videos and photographs, field monitoring teams have documented landmines being removed as well as documenting pictures of some victims receiving treatment in hospitals, after having their consent. This is in addition to conducting field visits alongside with demining experts to locations where Houthi-Saleh militias planted landmine fields before they withdraw.

Legal framework:

- On September 1, 1998, the Republic of Yemen has ratified the Landmine Ban Convention 1997. The Convention entered into force in March 1999. Yemen declared that it destroyed its arsenal of anti-personnel landmines on 27 April 2002.
- In addition, the Republic of Yemen is a state party to the four Geneva conventions and the two additional protocols of 1977 on prohibiting the use of weapons, projectiles or material which can cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering; including weapons which use is regulated by international treaties such as the landmines, booby traps and other devices.
- The national legislation to implement this Convention is law no. 25 of 2005 on the prohibition of producing, possessing, using, transporting or trading in anti-personnel landmines. This law was passed by the Yemeni parliament on April 19, 2005.

Planting Landmines:

Information contained in this report demonstrates that Houthi-Saleh militias have planted thousands of anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines and explosive devices during their military campaigns in Aden, Abyan, Lahej and Aldhalea in south Yemen.

Demining teams formed by army forces loyal to President Hadi and elements of the people's resistance supported by experts and modern equipment provided by Arab Coalition Forces were able to clear a number of areas where landmines were planted. These areas include Alanad Air Base in Lahej province, Khawr Maksar area, Aljala neighborhood, the Green City, Dar Saad, Beir Ahmar and Amran areas in the city of Aden as well as Howta, Karesh and Alanad cities in the province of Lahej.

According to a report issued from the Relief and War Victims Care Committee, a committee established by the Government of Yemen, Houthi-Saleh militias have planted landmines and explosive devices on public roads and city entrances.

Based on field reports, the Committee said that Houthi militias have planted landmines in some residential areas and rural villages in the four southern governorates, which were liberated from Houthis and Saleh forces, namely; Aden, Abyan, Aldhalea and Lahej provinces.

The government report, a copy of which was obtained by the Coalition, says that "the problem of landmines is not confined to these four provinces only but it also extends to affect central and eastern provinces in Yemen as landmine incidents were reported in Taiz, Albaidha, Mareb and Shabwa provinces".

The Committee pointed out that so far, no serious efforts were made to remove these landmines with the exception of what has been done by the United Arab Emirates, which established several teams to deal with this problem in Aden and some neighboring provinces. The committee indicated that the people's resistance and the national army have deployed some local expert teams for demining opera-

tions but these efforts were restricted to clearing roads connecting cities and main streets inside these cities while there are still many landmine fields threatening the lives of people.

The committee revealed that “the Executive Mine Action Program in Aden is exerting relentless efforts in demining operations and in collecting unexploded ordnance. A total of 1,173 landmines and unexploded ordnance were collected during the few past weeks”.

According to the report, the lack of landmine maps and the hazards surrounding individuals operating in demining action restricts the operations of the Center. Landmines have resulted in the death of eight people working with the Center and injured twenty-three others with some having serious injuries.

Aref Mohammed Alselli, a worker in the National Demining Program, Aden Branch, says that Houthi and Saleh insurgents have planted thousands of mines including explosive devices and ordnance using gas cans, fuses and batteries including Iranian “Dosat” ones in the areas of Aden airport, Badr camp, Almimdarah, Albasateen, Jawalah and the Green City in Aden as well as Alanad military base and surrounding areas in addition to some farms in Lahej, Alalam road intersection and on roadsides, especially the roads connecting Aden to Abyan.

In the province of Mareb, the Monitoring Team have conducted on November 20, 2015 an interview with demining experts including Sergeant Hassan Mohammed Thabet and Corporal Atef Yehya Nasser. Both of them confirmed that they, and their team, have removed, within few days, 1500 mines including anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. These mines were planted on public roadsides, Alfaw area, Shaiya area and the entrances of some farms owned by citizens in Alfaw area.

Landmine experts indicated that Houthi-Saleh militias have used anti-tank landmines and converted them into anti-personnel landmines by connecting them to pedals, batteries and capsules that detonate as soon as pressure is applied to them.

Landmine experts have shown us samples of these mines, which can be seen in the pictures contained in this report.



Figure 1: A picture showing the use of pedals in anti-tank landmines to convert them into anti-personnel landmines, Mareb, .November 2015

Victims of landmines and exploded war remnants:

Aden Province:

Landmines planted by Houthi-Saleh militias during their armed invasion in some districts of Aden province have killed 75 people. The Monitoring Team have documented and identified 39 cases during the months of July and August 2015 while 120 others suffered various injuries; out of them are 12 children and 13 women, with three of them suffered permanent disabilities. Forty-Eight people suffered medium to severe injuries; nine of them had permanent disabilities while others suffered partial disabilities.

Landmines have resulted in various injuries to victims including amputation of legs and hands, severe injuries in the backbone, face, eyes, abdomen and other parts of the body. On August 9, 2015 the explosion of a landmine in the residential city of Enma, Sheikh Othman district, have resulted in the death of three brothers from one family; Ahmed Hamdi 21 years old, Mahmoud Hamdi 19 years old and Mohammed Hamdi 17 years old as they were entering their house returning back from displacement.

On August 8, Nasser Mohammed Almatari, 35 years old, was killed and his Toyota Hilux vehicle 2009 was wrecked as a result of the explosion of a landmine in Beir Fadhl area, Mansoura district.

In the province of Abyan, landmines planted by Houthi militias, have resulted in more than 20 cases of deaths including women and children and injured dozens. Monitoring team have documented 26 cases.

In the province of Lahej, landmines planted by Houthi militias have killed more than 50 people. In Aldhalea province, more than 17 deaths have been reported as a result of landmines.

Province	Type of crime	Distribution by district					Total
		Children	Women	Civilians	Resistance fighters	Members of demining teams	
Aden	Killed	7	9	35	26	3	75
	Wounded	12	18	48	32	10	120
Lahej	Killed	5	11	49	27	4	96
	Wounded	4	6	19	45	2	76
Abyan	Killed	2		8	13	1	24
	Wounded			3	16		19
Aldhalea	Killed			7	12		19
	Wounded			9	13		22
Mareb	Killed	1	1	35			37
	Wounded	3	1	94			98

Mareb Province:

In the province of Mareb, landmines planted by Houthi militias have killed 44 people including women and children as reported by the Office of the Ministry of Health in the province.

On October 13, at least four people of the same family have been killed and another travelling passenger was injured when their vehicle hit an anti-tank landmine in Alfaw area, southwest of the province of Mareb.

As stated by the Demining Team, Houthi militias have planted hundreds of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines on public roads, farms of citizens and even the ancient city as follows:

1. In the houses of Al Sofan, 18 anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
2. In Halis road, 19 anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
3. On the main road to the ancient and archeological Mareb city, 14 mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.

4. In Jabal Alsaadi, eight mines were removed in addition to 20 mines that were planted in the entrance and the surroundings of Alssadi farm. All of these mines were connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
5. On the road leading to Al Ghwaibi farms, near the main road connecting the city of Mareb, eight anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
6. In the entrance of Ahmed Bin Haidar Alsharif house, 25 anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them. In addition, four improvised explosive devices were removed. They were all locally made.
7. A total number of 70 mines were removed from near mosque located next to the house of Ahmed Bin Haidar and then north towards the house of Zaid Munassar leading to the house of Alkahtani. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
8. In the entrance and farms of Alfaw, 12 anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
9. In the entrance of Almina house inside Alfaw area, eight mines were removed from the area. They were all anti-tank mines and they were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them. In addition, 200 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were seized before they are planted.
10. In the area of Alwadidi, 25 anti-tank mines were removed. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them. All of these mines were close to houses. In addition, 70 unplanted mines were seized inside the house of Sarhan Alkhawlani

11. In Al Barman area, 15 landmines were removed. These mines were planted near houses and in entrances of farms.
12. In Al Kawkabani house, Alfaw area, 8 mines planted in the house entrance were removed.
13. More than 70 mines were removed from Almanin area. They were all planted in the entrances of civilian farms and roads leading to the Dam. They were all connected to local-made pedals so they explode as soon as individual pressure is applied to them.
14. Fifteen mines were removed from the sides of the road leading to Wadi Aljufainah area.
15. Within the area of Wadi Aljufainah, more than 500 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were removed. In addition, large number of mines were individually removed by citizens in this area and the water channel near Aljufainah area.

Types of mines:

Houthi-Saleh militias have used landmines, remnant ordnance and explosive devices during their control of Aden, Abyan, Lahej, Aldhalea, Mareb and other areas. As stated by the Demining Center in Aden and the Demining Team in Mareb, Houthi-Saleh militias have used different types of mines including certain types which the Republic of Yemen has already informed the United Nations in April 2002 that it destroyed. This includes the anti-personnel mines.



Conclusions and Recommendations:

Based on the information contained in this report, we conclude that Houthi militias and Saleh forces have flagrantly and evidently violated the Mine Ban Convention 1997 to which Yemen is a state party. This adds another evidence that these militias do not respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This leads to characterizing them as violent groups more than being political parties and they shall be treated as such in light of this reality.

We also conclude that insurgents and Saleh forces have planted large quantities of anti-personnel mines, which is a war crime punishable under international laws before the International Criminal Court. In particular, daily facts confirm that these landmines are still claiming the lives of hundreds of civilians in areas liberated from the grip of these militias. This makes it imperative to exercise strong pressure on Houthi militias and Saleh forces to deliver the maps of minefields so demining teams of the legitimate government can clear them and save the lives of civilians.

If this reports casts light on a limited number of cities and provinces we managed to access to prepare this report, then there are real concerns regarding the risks of mines on the lives of population in other Yemeni cities and provinces that are still to be liberated from the grip of these militias. It is questionable if these militias will plant landmines and explosive devices in the still-to-be-liberated cities as they did in provinces covered by this report. This matter makes it imperative to find possible lobbying mechanisms to prevent the repetition of the atrocities resulting from the plantation of mines in other provinces.

Based on this report, we reach the same conclusion of Stephen Goose, director of Human Rights Watch's Arms Division, who said that "The Houthis are killing and maiming civilians with landmines," "Antipersonnel landmines are indiscriminate weapons that should not be used under any circumstances. Houthi forces should immediately stop using these horrific weapons and respect Yemen's obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty."

We strongly recommend the government of Yemen to immediately shoulder the responsibility of adding the case of landmines to human rights files being deliberated with the UN Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Sheik Ahmed in order to apply pressure on Houthis and their allies to stop using landmines and deliver maps for

all mines planted in liberated areas. Houthis shall be held responsible for providing suitable compensations, assistance and support to the wounded and the families of the victims. This is in addition to other victims of landmines in Yemen including providing medical care and rehabilitation.

We also recommend that international assistance is provided to help building the capacities of the legitimate government in this field through providing equipment and assistance to demining experts in order to continue the processes of clearing and removing mines and UXOs in a systematic manner following the end of war in areas that witnessed fighting.

Pictures from provinces



Anti-tank landmine UKA-63



Anti-personnel landmine PPM-2



boxes made of styrofoam containig PMP-2 anti personnel landmines

Pictures of mines planted by Houthi group in Aden province











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