



Iran and the Houthi in Yemen

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Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has been acting in any way possible to promote its interests in the Middle East, including the expansion of its sphere of influence within the Shiite communities, whom it has been able to harness to its needs. The Arab Spring revolts provided a great opportunity for Iran. Its Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps - al-Quds Force (IRGC_QF) units leveraged the civil unrests, revolts and the chaos that ensued to expand its activity within the region. This document analyzes Iran's activities via the IRGC in Yemen and is the first in a series of papers analyzing Iran's involvement, as well as that of its branches and proxies, in the Middle East.

Iran has a variety of interests in Yemen manifesting themselves through direct and indirect involvement in the civil war that has been ravaging the country since April 2015. The war waged between the Houthi (Zaidi Shi'a Muslims supported by Iran) and the Sunni regimes (supported by an Arab Sunni coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE) is another link in a chain of civil wars that has been part of life in Yemen since its inception. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ("KSA") is directly involved in the fight against the Houthis, similar to its involvement in the previous round of hostilities between August 2009 and February 2010. The novelty in the current round is the formation of an Arab Sunni coalition led by KSA and the UAE, with assistance of Egypt, Jordan, Sudan and others.

The Iranian support for the Houthis was limited at first however as KSA stepped in and the formation of the above coalition in 2015 changed the playing field. KSA hoped that its active involvement will hasten the cease of hostilities but in reality, the chaos

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just grew. The Yemenite population split into sectorial entities that struggled to find common ground that will help sustain the existence of a state. Moreover, the civil war has led to a severe humanitarian crisis and tens of thousands of casualties, many of which are a result of coalition attacks (per reports published by the UN in 2018)¹. On that note, this round of hostilities also gave rise to the child fighter phenomenon. The UN report reveals that over one third of the child fighters joined the Houthi forces who managed to recruit thousands of children.²

This chaotic reality plays into the hands of Iran, who believe that as the KSA inflict more civilian casualties in trying to apply pressure on the Houthis, the Houthis will gain more support. Therefore, the KSA involvement plays a key role in Houthi recruitment propaganda³.

¹<https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2018/11/CTC-SENTINEL-112018.pdf>

²<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/un-two-thirds-child-soldiers-yemen-fight-houthi-rebels-180821062444661.html>

³<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/un-two-thirds-child-soldiers-yemen-fight-houthi-rebels-180821062444661.html>

Yemen has endured periods of instability since its inception, including internal struggles and several rounds of hostilities. The current round of violence started in June 2011 as part of the Arab Spring revolts and manifested itself through statewide demonstrations. At first, the demonstrations were aimed against President Ali Abdullah Salah, however they continued after the regime change in February 2012 and were then aimed against President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, who failed to unite the various sectorial factions. It should be noted in that regard, that Yemen is a tribal society composed of a range of tribes and sects, including the Houthis. The latter have continuously tried to improve their political and economic stature within Yemen, but historically focused on promoting an autonomous regime in northern Yemen where they make up the majority. The reality that resulted out of the latest civil war opened a window of opportunity for them, which they exploited in September 2014 by taking over parts of Yemen, including the capital city of Sanaa, and forming a shadow government⁴. This caused President Hadi to flee to KSA, his ally, that decided to step in and engage the Houthis⁵.

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Another significant player in the Yemenite arena is Al Qaida's (AQ) branch in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). AQAP is one of AQ's prominent extensions that has solidified its presence in several regions in Yemen⁶. The latest round of hostilities has created opportunities for AQAP to form alliances and strengthen their infrastructure, which may improve their organizational survival prospects over the long term. AQAP leaders learned from their 2011-2012 failure to control certain regions in Yemen, a major contributor to which was the alienation of local population. However, this time (i.e. April 2015) AQAP closely cooperated with the local elite and provided them with relative security and stability in return for their support - or at the very least their assurance that they will not fight them.

This pragmatism enabled AQAP to enjoy a reputation of a capable and reliable force ready to cooperate with local leadership who have shared interests. It is evident that the need to act against the Houthis enabled localized alliances between AQAP and the local Sunni tribe. In a sense, AQAP understands the advantages the Yemenite chaos provides it with and enables its fighters to serve as quasi mercenaries for certain local elite groups. AQAP indeed learned its lesson by adapting to the changing reality yet at the same time understanding the perils of taking over large parts of the country.⁷

Similarly, the positioning of Yemen as a major theater of Jihad did not elude the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which since 2015, as part of its long-term survival strategy as well as a counter balance to AQ, has been establishing secondary spheres of influence within preferred conflict arenas, among them Yemen. Indeed, ISIS

⁴<https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2018/11/CTC-SENTINEL-112018.pdf>

⁵<https://www.haaretz.co.il/MAGAZINE-1.6196109>

⁶<https://www.haaretz.co.il/MAGAZINE-1.6196109>

⁷<https://jamestown.org/program/guns-hire-al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-securing-future-yemen/>

bases in Yemen are small and have limited resources but have carried out many terror attacks against the Shiite population in Sanaa. Still, their cadre of operatives in Yemen falls short compared to that of AQAP. Having an active coalition presence in Yemen created another opportunity for ISIS. They can now act against the Shiite as well as the coalition as they have indeed carried out severe suicide bombings against those forces, among them an attack that was carried out on the anniversary of Operation Decisive Storm - the code name for the coalition’s military intervention. That said, the coalition’s attacks have significantly diminished ISIS’ ability to carry out significant attacks⁸. However, in light of its recent defeats in Iraq and Syria, the group rallies its fighters to join the Yemenite arena and revive its strength.

The multiple players within the Yemenite arena and their race to expand their spheres of influence has created enclaves of dominance, and what started out as localized fighting has quickly turned into a regional battlefield and another front where the Iranian axis clashes with the Saudi one in the fight for regional hegemony.

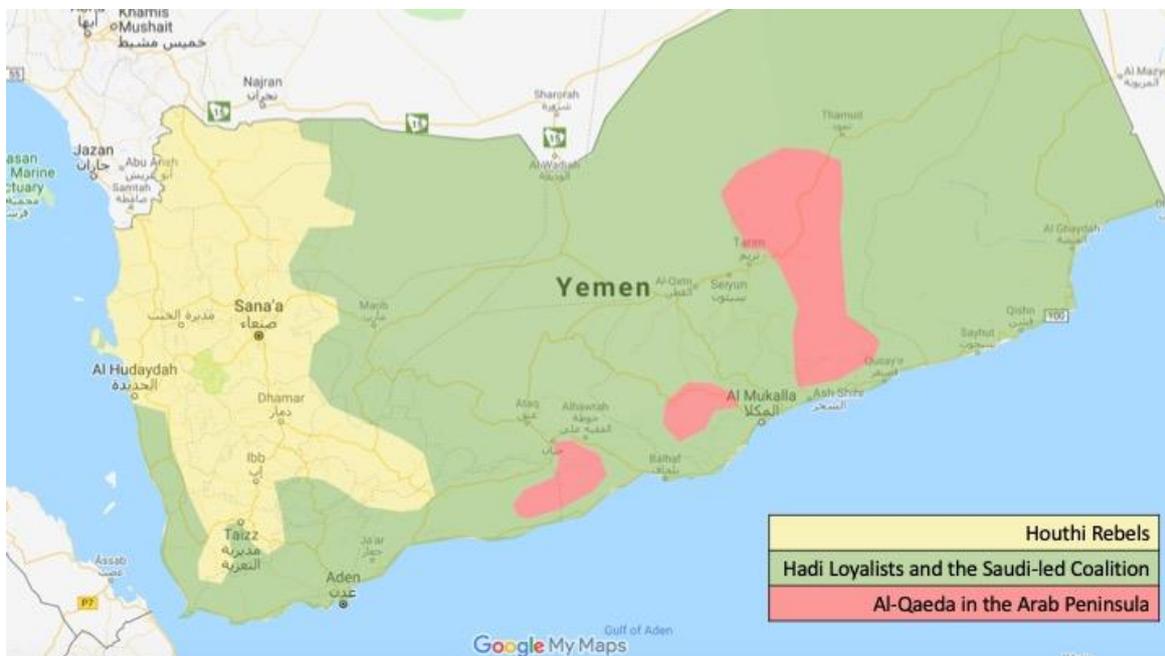


Figure 1 - Areas of Control (December 2018)

The Iranian policy in Yemen rests on three main pillars: (i) supporting the Houthis; (ii) disrupting and harming Arab Sunni interests, especially those of KSA; (iii) controlling the Bab el-Mandeb Strait which connects the Mediterranean to the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean.

⁸<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/challenging-the-yemeni-state-isis-in-aden-and-al-mukalla>

The IRGC is the Iranian organ entrusted with implementing Iranian policy through financing, arming and training the Houthis.⁹ Iran relies on the IRGC-QF units 400 and 190 for smuggling weapons to militias in areas of conflict, including Yemen.¹⁰ The QF commander responsible for handling the Houthis is Abdolreza Shahlaei, a senior commander of Unit 400.¹¹ It should be noted that even though there is a Shiite commonality between the Iran and the Houthis (albeit with a somewhat different theology), Iran has denied its direct involvement in fighting in Yemen, but did publicly side with the Houthis¹². Furthermore, at the start of the hostilities, the Houthis did not have any advanced weaponry or weapon manufacturing capabilities. Their strength was in their numbers, tenacity and their ability to leverage the chaos in Yemen¹³.

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2019 has seen the emergence of official diplomatic support from Iran. In August of 2019, Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei received a Houthi delegation in Tehran, during which he declared his support for “the resistance of Yemen’s believing men and women.”¹⁴ Following this, Ibrahim Mohamed al-Dailami, a Houthi member, was appointed as Houthi ambassador to Tehran, with the Iranian Foreign Ministry quickly recognizing the appointment. The Houthi’s leader, Abdulmalik al-Houthi, declared on August 17th his intention to engage in diplomatic relations “with friendly countries, in particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran.”¹⁵

Finance - Iran has funded the Houthis even before the lawful regime fell in 2014. Most of the funding, \$10-25 million, was delivered courtesy of the Iranian embassy in Sanaa, in the form of support for cultural and religious events¹⁶. This funding reflects one of the pillars of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy - cultural and religious support for Shiite around the world. After the fall of the Yemenite lawful regime and the start of hostilities, Iran continued to funnel large sums of money through Sanaa International Airport until coalition forces shut it down in 2015. It should be noted that despite a blockade that has been imposed on Yemen’s naval ports, ships with humanitarian aid continued to dock, especially in the Port of Hodeida, and it stands to reason that some carried concealed cash shipments. It should also be noted that in January, a report by a UN Panel of Experts on Yemen found that fuel loaded from Iranian ports under false documentation was being donated to listed individuals in Yemen by companies functioning as front companies in order to avoid detection by UN

⁹<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-iran-houthis/exclusive-iran-steps-up-support-for-houthis-in-yemens-war-sources-idUSKBN16S22R>

¹⁰ <https://abaadstudies.org/pdf-25.html>

¹¹ <http://vsquds.info/en/content/iran-strengthens-hold-yemen.html>

¹² <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1093501/iran-admits-supporting-houthis-holds-hezbollah's-arms>

¹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/world/middleeast/iran-houthis-fifth-fleet-admiral.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190814-irans-khamenei-backs-yemens-houthi-movement-calls-for-dialogue/>

¹⁵ <https://theArabweekly.com/appointment-houthi-ambassador-iran-bad-news-yemen>

¹⁶ <http://www.themedialine.org/featured/how-irans-financing-of-houthi-rebels-in-yemen-has-prolonged-the-war/>

inspectors. The fuel was then sold and with profits used to finance the Houthi war effort. The Panel also traced the supply of UAVs and a mixing machine for rocket fuel to the Houthis, as-well-as uncovering that individuals of Iranian origin funded these purchases.¹⁷ There have also been allegations of Iranian funding reaching Fadhi Ba'Oum, a leader of the secessionist Southern Movement, or al-Hirak al-Janoubi.¹⁸ This would not be far-fetched, as al-Hirak al-Janoubi have a good relationship with the Houthis and are also in a battle against President Hadi's forces.¹⁹

Armament - The Iranian aid on that front included the supply of various armament on the one hand and the improvement and development of weaponry on the other. Despite the aerial and naval blockades imposed by the KSA-led coalition forces, Iran has consistently attempted to arm the Houthis. Between April 2015 and October 2016, the U.S. Navy, in its capacity as a member of an international task force formed to fight piracy and prevent violation of an international embargo on gun running, detained five vessels en route from Iran to Houthi forces that carried a wide variety of armament, such as AK-47 assault rifles, anti-tank missiles and anti-tank mines²⁰. An analysis performed by Conflict Armament Research Organization found that the AK-47 serial numbers were consecutive which attests to the fact that they came from a government owned stock rather than arms dealers. Further, a serial number on a Kornet AT-missile captured in Yemen belonged to the same batch of weaponry that has been captured on one of the above vessels²¹. Additional shipments continued to flow to the Houthis and the last one reported, which included over one thousand assault rifles, was captured by the U.S. Navy at the end of August 2018²². Previous interceptions by the Australian and French Navies in 2016 in the Red Sea yielded Iranian weapons, including almost 2,000 AK-47s and 100 RPGs on a single dhow, and a similar number of AK47s and nine anti-tank missiles on a different boat.²³

Because of coalition and western naval forces efforts to block the arms shipments from Iran to Yemen, the IRGC started to cover their tracks and change their smuggling routes. At the beginning of August 2017, intelligence sources reported that armament carrying ships outbound from Iran docked close to the Kuwaiti coast and their cargo was being transferred onto smaller ships heading for Yemen²⁴.

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¹⁷ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2019_83_E.pdf

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/skynewsarabia/status/1045701203496239104>

¹⁹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/yemen-southerners-see-hope-houthis-rise-2014102052535893759.html>

²⁰ <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/28/politics/us-intercepts-iranian-weapons/index.html>

²¹ <http://www.conflictarm.com/dispatches/maritime-interdictions-of-weapon-supplies-to-somalia-and-yemen/>

²² <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/8/30/us-navy-seizes-shipment-of-arms-off-yemen-coast>

²³ <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/u-s-seizes-iranian-arms-shipment-likely-intended-for-yemen-rebels-1.5427161>

²⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-kuwait-iran-exclusive/exclusive-iran-revolutionary-guards-find-new-route-to-arm-yemen-rebels-idUSKBN1AH4I4>

In addition to the above, the UN Security Council published a report condemning Iran for not preventing the delivery of advanced weaponry to the Houthi, including Burkan 2 ballistic missiles, fuel storage tanks, and UAVs such as Ababil 2 (AKA Qasef-1 by the Houthis). The report also determined that the above constituted a violation of the Security Council's resolution 2216 (2015)²⁵. Saudi Arabia also put on in May 2019 an exhibition in Jeddah called the "Facts in Minutes" exhibition, which showcased Iranian ballistic missiles, UAVs, remote controlled-boats, optical binoculars and anti-armor weaponry used by the Houthis.²⁶

Improvement of Weaponry - The blockade imposed on Yemenite ports disrupted the Iranian arms shipments. Therefore, the IRGC started to build a weapons manufacturing infrastructure that focused on anti-aircraft systems, UAVs, shore-to-ship missiles, IED, marine mines, remote controlled vehicles such as drone boats and ballistic missiles as follows:

- **Anti-Aircraft** - In April 2015, at the beginning of the current hostilities, coalition forces destroyed most of the outdated anti-aircraft missiles held by the Houthis, yet in the last 18 months some advanced fighter jets were shot down while others evaded Houthi anti-aircraft missiles. The relevant action reports suggest that the Houthis, aided by IRGC weapons specialists, succeeded in converting Russian air-to-air missiles (AA-10) to anti-aircraft use. Moreover, coalition forces intercepted at least one weapons shipment that included parts for an Iranian anti-aircraft system (Sayyad-2C)²⁷. It has also been reported by IHS Jane's Military and Security Assessment's Security Centre that the Houthis have modified the surface-to-air S-75 missile to create the Qaher-1, which requires repurposing the missile to carry a 350kg warhead instead of the original 195kg, which experts claim could not have been done without foreign-state support. On June 6th 2019, an SA-6 missile, likely enabled with Iranian assistance, shot down a US reconnaissance drone in Yemen.²⁸
- **Shore to Ship** - In October 2016 it was first reported that a UAE cargo ship was hit by a Houthi missile launched from a shore located battery. The report further claims that the ship had apparently been hit by a C-802 missile that was provided to the Houthis by the IRGC²⁹. In the following week the same battery attacked two US Navy ships that had to deploy countermeasures and in response used cruise missiles to destroy three coastal radar stations³⁰. Even though the above batteries were identified as under Houthi control, the latter denied their involvement but did not suggest an alternative culprit³¹. In light of the destruction of the above radars the Houthi started using civilian naval radars installed on civilian ships

²⁵<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/15/politics/un-report-iran-saudi-yemen/index.html>

²⁶<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1504726/middle-east>

²⁷<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-support-to-houthi-air-defenses-in-yemen>

²⁸<https://news.usni.org/2019/06/16/u-s-claims-iranian-missile-fired-at-drone-in-gulf-of-oman-incident>

²⁹<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/10/yemeni-houthis-fire-at-ship-with-iranian-supplied-rocket.php>

³⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/13/world/middleeast/yemen-rebels-missile-warship.html>

³¹<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/new-round-missiles-fired-us-warship-houthi-rebels-yemen-saudi-arabia-coalition-uss-mason-a7363866.html>

docked in the Port of Hodeida and the Port of Salif.³² The UN Panel of Experts on Yemen, which inspected projectile debris from crude carriers and bulk-carriers hit by anti-ship missiles from Houthi-controlled areas, found technical similarities with the Iranian made *Noor*, a variant of the Chinese C-802.³³

- **UAV** - All parties to the hostilities have made use of UAVs, either for intelligence gathering or aerial attacks. In contrast to the coalition that used either Chinese or American made UAVs, the Houthis claim their UAVs (mostly Qasef-1) are of local production. Contrary to this claim, an analysis performed by Conflict Armament Research on captured Houthi UAVs, concluded that they were not only replicas of the Iranian Ababil family UAVs, but were also manufactured in Iran. The analysts based their conclusion on the striking similarity between the Houthi and Iranian UAVs, the fact that their parts came from the same suppliers and that their serial numbers match Iranian batches³⁴. It should be noted that the Houthis use this type of UAV for kamikaze like attacks and have used it to neutralize KSA and UAE Patriot batteries. In July 2019, the Houthis also held a military exhibition unveiling new drones, including the Samad-3 and the Qasef 2K. The UN Panel of Experts on Yemen also began noting from August 2018 the use of UAVs with extended ranges by the Houthis. The Panel suspects the components have been imported and assembled in Yemen. Furthermore, on January 29th, the Arab Coalition announced that Iran had supplied the Houthis with the S-129 drone, which has the capacity of carrying eight guided missiles, and a range of 2,000km.³⁵ Particular drones that have been launched by the Houthis and shot down also have been identified by experts as having engines that belong to a Chinese company (DLE) that has distribution chains in Iran.³⁶
- **IED** - Conflict Armament Research published (September 2018) an in-depth analysis of IEDs, land mines and marine mines used by Houthi forces. Even though some of the charges were regulation explosive attributed to Soviet Army surplus, the remainder was of local production. Yet, the parts of the locally produced charges pointed to Iranian involvement in training of the local personnel and the supply of critical components. It seemed that the casing and the explosive charge were of Houthi local production, but the switches, IR sensors, transponders and receivers were Iranian. Moreover, similar components were captured upon the arrest of Shiite terror cells in Bahrain as well as on board of Jihan 1, a weapon carrying cargo vessel captured in 2013.³⁷ A previous analysis by the same organization on IED camouflaged as rocks concluded that the materials and the mode of camouflage typical to these charges is forensically identical to IEDs located in Iraq and Lebanon in areas where Iran and Hezbollah sponsored militia are active.³⁸

³²<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/curbing-houthi-attacks-on-civilian-ships-in-the-bab-al-mandab>

³³https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2019_83_E.pdf

³⁴<http://www.conflictarm.com/perspectives/iranian-technology-transfers-to-yemen/>

³⁵<https://abaadstudies.org/pdf-25.html>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷<http://www.conflictarm.com/dispatches/mines-and-ieds-employed-by-houthi-forces-on-yemens-west-coast/>

³⁸<http://www.conflictarm.com/perspectives/radio-controlled-improvised-explosive-devices-rcied/>

- **Marine Mines** - During May 2017, in light of an increased number of incidents where ships were hit by Houthi marine mines or have identified marine mines along the Yemenite coast, a warning regarding the international marine routes close the Yemenite coast was posted. At least eight incidents have occurred between February 2017 and May 2017 where vessels were hit and sailors perished. Some of the mines were identified as being of local production but others, including acoustic mines, were identified as similar to the Iranian Sadaf marine mine.³⁹ Some of these mines were suspected as being deployed by an Iranian submarine.⁴⁰
- **Drone Boats** - At the end of January 2017 a Saudi frigate was hit by a remote- controlled drone boat. A Conflict Armament Research analysis concluded that similar drone boats captured by coalition forces indicated a possible connection to Iran. Even though the boats were originally donated to Yemen by the UAE before the hostilities broke out, their conversion to suicide boats was likely carried out by Iranian engineers and technicians. Moreover, some components were originated in Iran, such as the command and control computer that had a Farsi keyboard⁴¹. The KSA has also documented an image of the Saviz, an Iranian cargo ship located off the coast of the Red Sea in the Dahlek island group, with three speedboats that appear similar to the ones the Houthis use.⁴²
- **Ballistic Missiles** - As of 2014 The Houthi started launching ballistic missiles of various ranges towards Saudi targets along the KSA-Yemen border. These included several versions of Scud, Haeseong, Tochka, Qaher-1 and Zelzal-1 that were part of the Yemenite arsenal prior to the regime change. Yet, since 2017 the Houthi started to use Qaher-2 missiles that have a longer range and heavier payloads, which were likely supplied by a state actor. Additionally, at the beginning of 2018 the Houthi started using Burkan-1 and Burkan-2 which are almost identical to the Iranian Qiam-1 in terms of appearance and range.⁴³ It should be noted that the various Burkan missiles demonstrated improved ranges and accuracy levels, at ranges of up to 1,000 Kilometers⁴⁴ and hit Riyadh⁴⁵, the Saudi capital and the port city of Yanbu on the Red Sea coast.⁴⁶ In August 2019, the Houthis launched a Burkan-3 missile for the first time, striking a military target in Damam, eastern Saudi Arabia, an attack in which the IRGC most likely played a role in

³⁹https://www.saudiembassy.net/sites/default/files/Facts%20about%20Iranian%20involvement%20in%20Houthi%20aggression%20against%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20Saudi%20Arabia_0.pdf

⁴⁰https://www.ukpandi.com/fileadmin/uploads/uk-pi/LP%20Documents/LP_Bulletins/170519_NYA_M_Special_Advisory_Yemen.pdf

⁴¹<http://www.conflictarm.com/perspectives/anatomy-of-a-drone-boat/>

⁴²<https://abaadstudies.org/print.php?id=59795>

⁴³<http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-threat-and-proliferation/todays-missile-threat/non-state-actors/houthis/>

⁴⁴<https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/yemen/index.html>

⁴⁵<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-security/iran-aligned-houthis-in-yemen-fire-missiles-at-saudi-capital-idUSKBN1IA100>

⁴⁶<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1315886/saudi-arabia>

the deployment, transfer, or modification of the missile used.⁴⁷ As of September 2018, 197 missiles were launched towards the KSA, killing 112 people and injuring hundreds of others.⁴⁸

- **Training** - While formally Iran mostly avoids active involvement in combat in the various arenas where it is active, the regime uses the IRGC, especially the IRGC-QF to train its proxies and harm Iran's adversaries. In order to expand and strengthen their presence on the ground, the IRGC used Unit 3800 of

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Hezbollah, which is entrusted with providing advisory and training to entities outside the Lebanese arena. Initial evidence attesting to Hezbollah's involvement in training the Houthis came to light when a group of operatives were arrested in mid-2014.⁴⁹ Similar to the Syrian arena, the IRGC serve in Yemen in an advisory and training capacity in various combat fields from guerilla warfare through naval warfare and intelligence gathering through ballistic missiles, UAV, and drone boats operation. Most of the pertinent information on this involvement came from Houthi deserters and prisoners of war. One of those POWs described in great detail how he was trained by IRGC and Hezbollah personnel in operating ballistic missiles. Per him, his theoretical training took place in Sanaa whereas the practical training took place in the field⁵⁰. Additionally, during August 2018, formal Saudi sources published several videos that showed IRGC and Hezbollah personnel providing theoretical training to the Houthis⁵¹. Furthermore, the Abaad Centre has published a study confirming that the Houthis have sent wounded members for treatment through Oman, but who then returned as experts in Iranian weapons technology, further implicating Iran in covertly supplying weapons training to the Houthis.⁵²

Additional evidence attesting to the IRGC and Hezbollah in Yemen rely on the number of casualties. An independent research published in June 2017 presented the number of dead and injured sustained by both organizations from 2015 through mid-2017. It shows that during this period 44 operative were either killed or captured by coalition forces while either training the Houthis or leading them to battle.⁵³ In February 2018, coalition sources reported that a senior ranking member of the IRGC who oversaw the design and implementation of ballistic missiles systems for the Houthi forces was killed in one of the airstrikes in the

⁴⁷ <https://uprising.today/video-footage-shows-yemeni-army-firing-borkan-3-missile-on-saudi-military-target-indammam/>

⁴⁸ <http://gulfbusiness.com/saudi-says-110-citizens-residents-killed-missiles-yemen-date/>

⁴⁹ <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2018/03/25/Ir...use-of-Hezbollah-Unit-3800-to-create-a-new-Hezbollah-in-Yemen.html>

⁵⁰ <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1223831/middle-east>

⁵¹ https://twitter.com/kbsalsaud/status/1030158369712168960?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1030158369712168960&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thenational.ae%2Fworld%2Fsaudi-arabia-s-us-ambassador-posts-evidence-of-hezbollah-in-yemen-1.760997

⁵² <https://abaadstudies.org/pdf-25.html>

⁵³ <https://warontherocks.com/2017/06/irans-growing-casualty-count-in-yemen/>

Sa'ada province.⁵⁴ In September 2018 it was reported that eight Hezbollah combatants were among the 41 combatants killed in an airstrike in the same province.⁵⁵ In the same month, two Hezbollah operatives who served in a training capacity, were killed in an airstrike against a Houthi operations center in Marib province.⁵⁶ Lately, as the coalition expanded its operations, several reports citing deaths of senior Hezbollah operatives during airstrikes on Houthi headquarters were filed.⁵⁷ Similarly, prior to conducting peace talks in Sweden in December 2018, the Houthi insisted that fifty injured and a similar number of bodyguards, among them IRGC and Hezbollah operatives, be transferred for medical treatment outside Yemen.⁵⁸ The number of IRGC and Hezbollah casualties in Yemen as well as their affiliation to various combat functions is evidence of their involvement in the hostilities, mainly in advisory and training capacities. Iran, via the IRGC and Hezbollah, is taking great steps to exert influence and change the outcome in the battlefield, often at the price of sacrificing its own operatives and exposing its involvement and operations.⁵⁹

In summation, Iran and its proxies' involvement in the Yemen Civil War mainly manifests itself in providing advisory and training; the supply of munitions and capabilities to develop and manufacture their own weapon systems; financing through fuel donations from front companies; diplomatic support and recognition; and the usage of the Houthis as a cover to launch their own attacks from Iranian soil.

⁵⁴<http://www.mei.edu/publications/saudi-arabia-led-coalition-kills-irgc-missile-officer-yemen>

⁵⁵<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-group/saudi-led-coalition-says-hezbollah-fighters-killed-in-yemen-battles-idUSKBN1JLOYR>

⁵⁶<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1350986/middle-east>

⁵⁷<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2018/09/02/Hezbollah-commander-killed-in-air-strike-by-coalition-in-Yemen-s-Saada.html>

⁵⁸<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1474966/exclusive-signs-houthi-intransigence-ahead-sweden-talks>

⁵⁹ In mentioning Hezbollah, it may also be noted that in May of 2019, Sam FM, the Houthi-run radio station in Yemen announced it was beginning a pledge to raise funds for Hezbollah, further attesting to the integration and interdependence of the two Iranian proxies. <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/yemen-s-houthis-launch-fundraising-drive-for-cash-strapped-hezbollah-1.866660>

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy.

ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

ABOUT THE IRAN AND SHI'ITE TERRORISM DESK

The "Iran and Shi'ite Terrorism" Desk is engaged in the analysis of Iran's involvement in terrorist activity. In addition, the desk examines the strategic aspect of Iran in terms of internal and external Iranian discourse and their influence on decision-making processes, which have translated into operative and tactical steps and implemented by the Revolutionary Guards and their branches/proxies around the world. In addition, the desk's articles will review methods of coping with this extensive activity, as expressed in arrests, the foiling of terrorist attacks, and more.