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RIGHTS  
RADAR

# YEMEN: HELL OF CHILDHOOD

REPORT ON THE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS  
DURING WARTIME

2014 – 2018

FEBRUARY 2019





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Yemen has been embroiled in a fierce war since the summer of 2014 and after the successive political crises. Since then, the country has been suffering from a destructive civil war between the Houthi coup militia, which calls itself “Ansar Allah”, and the forces of the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh on one hand, and the internationally recognized Yemeni government forces led by President Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi and supported by the Arab Coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other hand.

During this wartime, the Yemeni arena has witnessed many serious violations of children’s rights committed by the various parties of this conflict, including all kinds of grave violations identified by the United Nations and the international treaties and conventions. In this report, Rights Radar Organization for Human Rights attempts to highlight these violations during the period from the summer of 2014 to the summer of 2018, aiming to identify the most prominent cases of violations against children’s rights that have been monitored and documented by their field monitors. Actually, we believe that the number of violations in Yemen

is much greater than what is listed in this report.

In 2003, the United Nations identified in a list the grave violations of children’s rights during armed conflicts. These serious violations are known as “The Six Grave Violations against children during Armed Conflicts”. They are as follows:

1. Killing and maiming of children
2. Recruitment and use of children as soldiers
3. Rape or other sexual abuse against children
4. Attacks on schools or hospitals
5. Denial of humanitarian access to children
6. Abduction of children

The thematic framework of this human rights report has been identified based on these international determinants of the violations committed against children’s rights. This report provides the statistical data and documents and the critical information related to the most serious and threatening violations of children’s rights in Yemen during the period of war from the middle of 2014 to the end of 2018.

## GENERAL INDICATORS

The estimate of 2011 showed that the population of Yemen was about 27 million. With a population growth rate of 3.48% during the years 2001-2011, the estimated population of Yemen at the end of 2017 was approximately 33 million, the average size of a single family was 7.2 persons, the average number of people per house

was 7.1 and 46% of the population were children under the age of 15. By analyzing these statistics and indicators, the number of children in Yemen under the age of 15 reached approximately 14,720,000.



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The lack of accountability for the violations of children's rights in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law, particularly during wartime and armed conflict, is considered a serious threat to children's rights in Yemen. In particular, these laws warn of the wider threat of recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and exposing children to the risk of murder and injury, as well as other violations, such as abduction and captivity, the denial of education, health and food and the spread of diseases and epidemics.

At the international level, conventions oblige the parties of the armed conflict to apply their agreed obligations, convert them into procedural texts, include them in their national laws, establish the legal frameworks and institutions to implement these obligations and submit the periodic reports on what has been accomplished, as well as the existing obstacles and constraints that hinder the cooperation with the international community in order to overcome them.

In this context, the United Nations has adopted several international documents,

including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as a number of declarations, conventions and protocols that ensure the protection of human rights, including the rights of children.

At the national level, Yemeni legislations state the provision of the necessary protection and care for children. To achieve this, Yemen issued the Children's Rights Law No. 45 (2002) and Law No. 24 (1992) on Juvenile Welfare. It has committed itself to making legal amendments that comply with the texts and provisions of a number of other international documents which, in particular, ensure the protection of children's rights during peace and armed conflicts. Moreover, Yemen has provided certain precise descriptions of violations, criminalized these violations and imposed punishment on violators. They are as follows:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Charter of the Rights of the Arab Child

- The Second Arab Plan of Action for Children
- Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Child Protection Working Group, and Supporting Tools (2012)
- The four Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols
- Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (1968) ratified by Yemen on 9/2/1987
- Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)

In addition, a number of the legal texts, which ensure the deterring and punishing of violators of children's rights, have been included in the penal laws such as The Penal Law No. 12 (1994), the Military Penal Law No. 21 (1998) and Law No. 24 (1998) on Combating Crimes of Kidnapping and Armed Interception.

Yemen has not joined the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court so far. Therefore, this is considered a procedural impediment for suing the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, even in cases when the national judiciary is unable to prosecute them. The claims of victims to achieve justice and fairness by prosecuting criminals remain merely a card used by the political forces and controlled by the national interests of influential countries. Thus, this hinders the prosecution of violators of children's rights and makes the achievement of justice dependent on the issuance of a (political) international resolution for prosecuting the perpetrators of war crimes before the International Criminal Court under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the violations against children's rights over the past four years, starting from when control was taken of the Yemeni capital Sana'a by the coupists (Houthi and Saleh) militia and the takeover of the national institutions, the military camps and the army weapons in the period from September 21, 2014 to the end of December 2018. This was followed by violent acts and the armed conflict between the forces of the legitimate government headed by Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and the militants of the two sides of the coup (Houthi and Saleh). Therefore, this war has resulted in a painful reality concerning human rights, in general and the rights of children in particular.

This human rights report is limited to monitoring the most serious violations that threatens children's rights during armed conflict, which are known internationally as "the six grave violations against children", for which the Security Council Resolution No. 1612 (2005) was issued.

Rights Radar Organization monitored

more than 3,451 cases of the recruitment of children into conflict who were under the age of 18, committed by the parties of the armed conflict in Yemen during the period from the summer of 2014 to the summer of 2018 in the governorates of Saada, Amran, Dhamar, Sana'a, Hajjah, Al-Mahaweeet, Ibb, Taizz, Hodeidah, Lahj, Al-Dali, Aden, Ma'rib and Shabwa. These violations were committed by the militia of the Houthi group and the government forces. The human rights reports stated that the Houthi group committed about 96% of the violations of the recruitment of children.

According to the press statements made by Julietta Touma, the media director of the UNICEF's Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO), the armed conflict in Yemen resulted in the murder and injury of more than 6,000 children during the first three years of the war. Undoubtedly, the three main parties of the conflict, who take responsibility for the deaths and injuries of children, are the Arab coalition forces led

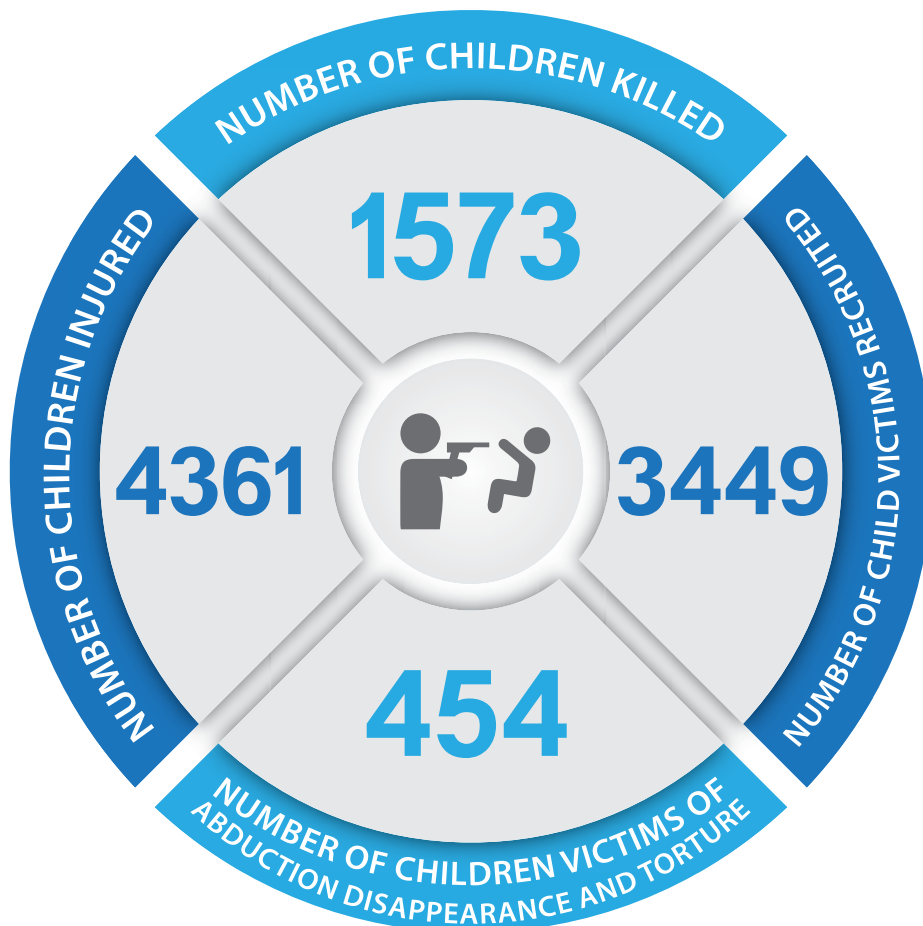
by Saudi Arabia, the militants of the Houthi militia and the government forces or their loyal forces.

Reports issued by international organizations have revealed that more than half a million Yemeni children have dropped out of school since the end of 2014. According to estimates by UNICEF, the total number of out-of-school children exceeds two million.

According to UNICEF reports, there have been, at least, 2,419 cases of recruitment of children due to the armed conflict in Yemen since March 2015. These reports state that there are about 8.2 million children in need of humanitarian aid, including access to education, food, medicine and safe drinking water.

It is regrettable to say that all the six grave violations of children’s rights have been suffered by the children of Yemen to varying degrees. All the parties of the conflict have also been involved in these violations to varying degrees, but the Houthi militia, Al-Qaeda, the government forces and the Arab coalition are included in the “List of Shame” issued by the Secretary-General on an annual basis. Although the final list of 2016 was issued after the deletion of Saudi Arabia, it was included in the list in the following year.

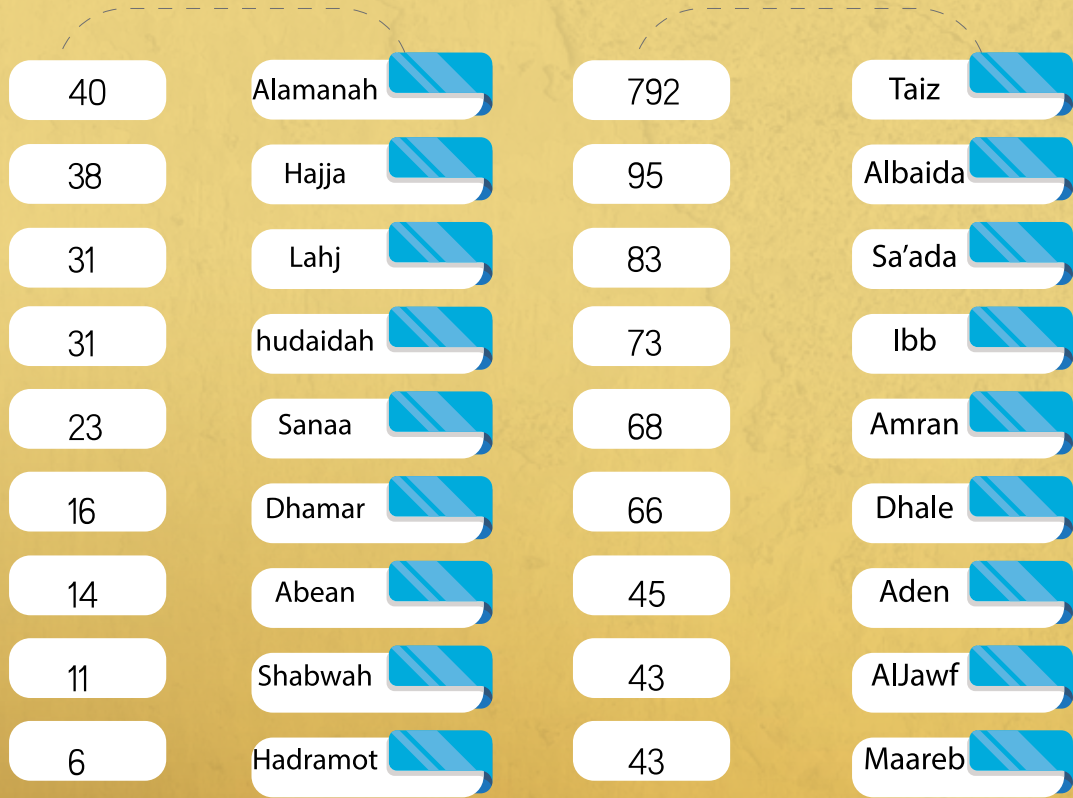
In the following pages, we take a brief look at the reality of children’s rights in Yemen based on the six grave violations.



# KILLING AND MAIMING OF CHILDREN

Violations of children’s rights ranged from direct killing by using live bullets, missiles or artillery shelling, aerial bombing, the explosion of mines and improvised explosive devices, or other means.

A TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN KILLED



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data and statistics obtained by Rights Radar confirm that more than 1,604 children were killed during the period included in this report. The Houthis bear responsibility for about 65% of these deaths, whether by using missile strikes, artillery shelling, mine explosion or direct sniping, while the Arab Coalition forces and the Yemeni government forces take responsibility for about 35% of the victims killed by airstrikes. In addition, more than half of this number of children

was killed by the Houthi and Saleh militia and the government forces that recruited and placed them on the front lines of the armed confrontations and caused them to be killed or injured in those confrontations. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said that the armed conflict in Yemen killed and injured more than 6,700 children during the past years of war in Yemen.



## VICTIMS OF MISSILE STRIKES

Rights Radar has verified that more than 1,046 children have been killed and more than 3,444 have been injured due to the use of ground missiles and artillery shells in populated areas. These weapons have been fired by the Houthi militants during the war in Yemen since the end of 2014. The number of children killed by the airstrikes of the Saudi-led Arab forces is estimated at more than 436. It is believed that the government forces and the loyal forces killed more than 15 children during the same period.

According to the statistics of several

sources, more than 1,540 recruited children, under the age of 18 and from the various parties of the war, were killed as victims of the armed confrontations between the warring forces. 1,070 children were recruited by the Houthi militia and the remaining number belonged to the government forces or the loyal forces. This was during the armed confrontations on all fronts of fighting, as well as more than 1,250 recruited children that were injured.



## LANDMINE VICTIMS

Before they were forced to withdraw from the areas controlled by them, the Houthi militia resorted to mine laying, going beyond impeding the advance of enemy forces to harming the displaced civilians who were expected to return to their abandoned homes. The mines were found in civilians' homes and cars and on farm doors. As usual, most victims were women and children.

The improvised explosive devices were spread in many places and took unexpected forms. They were sometimes in the form of children's toys and this happened in Aden, Taizz, Ma'rib and Al-Jawf.

The specialized demining teams

uncovered large numbers of mines from vehicles. They managed to demine them although they were fitted with individual pedals that allowed them to explode under the pressure of a person's foot. Some of these mines were ready to explode as soon as they were touched by the foot of a child or a small animal.

According to the organization, the mines laid by the Houthi militia killed more than 137 children during the period covered in this report. In addition, more than 106 children were injured and some of them have permanent disabilities.



## USE OF CHILDREN AS HUMAN SHIELDS

According to the field reports obtained by Rights Radar, the Houthi militia used children as human shields, whether in populated areas, schools or the places allocated for children in several Yemeni cities and districts to avoid the air raids launched by the Arab Coalition forces or the artillery shelling carried out by the government forces.

The most prominent example of this is the Houthis' use of children and families as human shields in Mocha, west of Taizz, which was controlled by the Houthi militia

according to several sources, including UN agencies. In a press conference, Rupert Colville, Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said; "The Houthis forced people to stay in their homes and the families who tried to escape from the areas controlled by the Houthis were targeted by the Houthi snipers." He also confirmed that this was an indication of the use of civilians as human shields by the Houthis.



## VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO BODILY INTEGRITY

International law guarantees the right to life for every human being and it criminalizes killing civilians and mutilating their organs. These principles are embodied within the purview of humanitarian law, human rights treaties and legal jurisprudence. Wars and armed conflicts are considered the greatest threat to children's lives. The risk indicators are high when children are present in conflict areas where civilians are exposed to indiscriminate shelling in the cities and villages.

Concerning the violation of the right to

bodily integrity, Rights Radar monitored 4,561 children that were injured with various types of injuries, including cases of permanent disability, total or partial paralysis, the amputation of limbs due to mines or the loss of sight as a direct result of injuries due to the shrapnel of missiles, shells and mines which were fired or laid by the Houthi and Saleh armed forces. Some children suffered from the serious injuries and physical deformities caused by the missile strikes of the Arab Coalition's airstrikes.

## TWO: CHILD RECRUITMENT

The recruitment of children under the age of 18 to use them as soldiers is prohibited under Yemeni law and international humanitarian law, as well as the international treaties and norms. It is defined as a war crime by the International Criminal Court as well.

The Law of Service Regulation in the Yemeni Armed Forces and the Child Rights Law emphasize that the age of 18 is the minimum legal age limit for recruiting and using children in acts of war. This is compatible with the commitment to human rights conventions made by Yemen before the international community.

The recruitment and use of children in conflicts and wars is one of the most prominent violations against children in Yemen.

After the expansion of war, the parties of the armed conflict in Yemen resorted to the recruitment of children since the beginning of 2015. The Houthi armed militia recruited and attracted children more than any of the other parties.

Although the violation is prohibited by law, this is not enough to protect children from the risk of recruitment. Many children are still exposed to the risk of recruitment either in the official formations of the army or the groups of Houthi militia. On December 18, 2018, both the Minister of Human Rights and the UN Country Team for Monitoring and Reporting represented by UNICEF signed an agreement which was called the “Updated Road Map” for implementing the UN “Joint Plan” to end the use and recruitment of children. The Minister of Human Rights said, “This agreement was signed in Sana’a in 2014. Measures were taken to legislate this agreement, but they were interrupted by the war waged by Houthi militia and its coup against legitimacy.”

The basic agreement between the Yemeni government and the Country Team stresses the beginning of implementing its projects and programs for the protection of

children without discrimination in the various governorates of the Republic of Yemen.

Many sources said that the Houthi militia has systematically recruited children since the beginning of its war against the state in 2004 and during its armed march towards the capital Sana'a in the summer of 2014 to control the reins of power by force and impose its own ideas and culture on the common people.

On December 19, 2018, the Associated Press reported that one of the leaders in the Houthi militia admitted that his group was responsible for the recruitment of 18,000 children in Yemen from the beginning of the war in 2014.

The year of 2016 witnessed a major campaign for the recruitment of children in the Houthi militia and its ally, Saleh. They recruited large numbers of children that exceeded what they did during 2015. Although there are no reliable, accurate

statistics, the videos published in the media can confirm the estimates that indicate that the number of recruited children exceeds thousands. The Houthi leader confirmed this to the AFP.

In its report, the UN documented that the Houthi group and the other armed groups, including the tribal and Muslim militia such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) recruited and trained children and deployed them in the fighting zones. The UN report confirmed that the number of children recruited in 2015 was five times more than the number in 2014 and the number of children killed and maimed was six times more than the number in 2014. It also attributed 72% of these violations to the Houthis, as well as the abductions and the use of schools for military purposes. The Houthi group bears the greatest responsibility for these violations.

The report of the UN Secretary-General did not disclose the number of children



recruited in 2015 and it only said that one third of the fighters were children in Yemen and that 72% of the 762 confirmed cases of child recruitment were carried out by the Houthis, five times more than in 2014. Thus, the enforced recruitment of children increased drastically.

In his statement to the Middle East Eye website, the former Foreign Minister Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi said, "About 70% of the coupist Houthi militia and Saleh forces consists of children."

The field monitoring teams of Rights Radar monitored and documented 3,451 children, including 123 children under the legal age, that were recruited in the military formations of the legitimate government and 3,325 children recruited by the Houthi militia and Saleh forces. They were deployed to their military training centers in a number of governorates such as Hajjah, Dhamar, Hudeidah and Amran under the supervision of the Houthi leaders and supervisors.

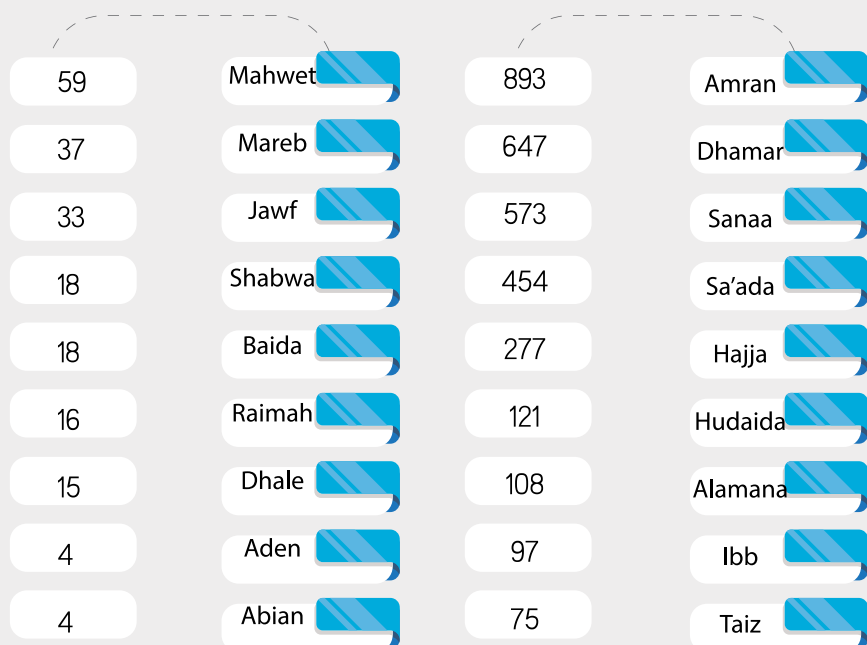
After analyzing the data, it was found that 93% of the children who had been recruited

during the previous period of the Yemeni war belonged to four of the 21 governorates in Yemen. These governorates are Amran, Dhamar, Sana'a and Sa'ada.

The recruited children are the most vulnerable due to their physical weakness and lack of experience and training. Some activists shared a copy of a handwritten list of names which showed that fifty students were killed on the fronts during fighting with the Houthis. They were from one school in Bani Hushaysh District in Sana'a Governorate.

The reports of the field monitors stated that 996 recruited children, at least, were killed and 1,065 were injured in more than 12 of the fighting fronts in the war between the government forces of the legitimate President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi on one hand and the Houthi militia and the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the other hand. Moreover, 381 children were taken captive and some of them returned to their families after being obliged to go to school and not to return to the fighting fronts.

A TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER VICTIMS OF CHILD SOLDIERS



# RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children are human rights violations that could result in grave breaches of international humanitarian law if they are committed within a plan of widespread and systematic attack against civilians.

In addition, sexual violence can be considered a war crime and anti-humanity crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Security Council Resolution No.1882 (2009), in which the Council identified sexual violence against children as a fundamental priority and called on the parties of the armed conflict to prepare and implement action plans to address this violation.

Unfortunately, rape cases are not reported in Yemen due to social reasons. However, some shocking stories have come to public attention. In these cases, children were raped and killed in Sana'a, Hajjah Ibb and Aden. Rape cases are considered criminal crimes, but they are not included in war crimes because they are not directly related to the situation of the armed conflict or carried out by persons who belong to the military or militia groups because of their positions or during the performance of their work. They are criminal crimes in which investigations and judicial proceedings take their natural legal course under the pressure of public opinion.

# ATTACKING SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

According to international humanitarian law, schools and hospitals must be protected as civilian facilities. In 2011, the cases of attacks were added and this resulted in the closure of these institutions because of the direct threats as a sufficient justification to include the violators on the List of Shame prepared by the UN Secretary-General annually.

The war, which broke out on September 21, 2014 on the eve of the invasion of the capital Sana'a and spread to most of the governorates, resulted in the deprivation of nearly two million children of the right to education and health directly or indirectly. In addition, thousands of the educational and health facilities were subjected to direct shelling which destroyed them totally or partially. Other facilities were also closed

for students and patients after being used as military barracks by militia, as stores for munitions and weapons or locations for recruitment, training and mobilization. The functions of these institutions were stopped after arresting the teachers and the workers in the health and educational facilities or threatening and forcing them to be displaced as they escape from torture.

In addition, these institutions were indirectly obstructed by preventing the children and workers in the educational and health facilities from attending school or seeking medical care. In some areas, the constant clashes spread terror, fear and anxiety among parents, preventing them from sending their children to school under these circumstances. Moreover, many of the teachers and workers in the educational

and health facilities were from areas which were under the control of the other party and the checkpoints prevented them from reaching their schools or hospitals.

Moreover, the large wave of displacement and deportation which was imposed by the militia on those who were against them and the inhabitants of the areas under the control of their weapons caused many of these institutions to be inhabited by the displaced and deported families. This prevented these institutions from continuing to provide the

Commissioner for Human Rights, 600 medical facilities were closed in 2016 due to the damage caused by the shelling and the lack of basic equipment and medical staff.

In its summary of 2016 events, a report issued by Human Rights Watch indicated that “Only 45% of the health facilities still provide their services and they face the acute shortage of medicines, equipment and staff. There are more than 1,600 schools which are affected by the conflict, so that they are not used.”



services for which they were established.

In August, UNICEF estimated that 3,600 schools, at least, were closed and this affected the education of 1.8 million children. In addition, 160 health facilities were closed due to conflict-related insecurity. The Houthi forces illegally arrested the aid workers and volunteers who attempted to deliver medical supplies to the health care facilities.

According to the Office of the High

In addition, 1,600,000 displaced children had no opportunity to continue their education. The UNICEF report stated that there were 212 attacks on schools and 95 attacks on hospitals.

Dr. Abdullah Lamalas, the Minister of Education in the legitimate government, said, “1700 schools were destroyed during the war waged by the militias of Houthi and Saleh in the various governorates.”

During the report period, Rights Radar's field monitoring teams monitored 1,836 cases of disrupting and destructing educational facilities and 420 health facilities, including 229 educational facilities and 165 health facilities that were totally or partially destroyed due to the direct shelling committed by the Houthi militia. The Houthis used 1,607 schools and 255 health facilities as military barracks for their militants after they stopped their educational and health activities. This made them a military target for the legitimate government forces and the Arab Coalition. This caused major damages to 24 schools and 9 health facilities. Education stopped in more than 1,400 schools, either because they were located in areas suffering from the continuous clashes or because they were used to shelter the displaced people from other areas escaping from oppression and torture.

This is in addition to the abduction and arrest of thousands of educators and forcing thousands of them to be displaced to areas out of control of the Houthi militia.

Rights Radar monitored at least 740 cases of house demolitions which were completely destroyed, including 717 houses that were targeted by the direct shelling of missiles and artilleries or using locally manufactured bombs. It also monitored 1,136 cases of the partial destruction of civilian houses, including 1,106 cases that were committed by the Houthi militia and Saleh forces.

These violations prevented hundreds of thousands of children from having access to education and health services and their lives were directly or indirectly threatened.



## DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO CHILDREN

On November 1, 2018, the New York Times published a photo of a Yemeni female child who was on the verge of death due to malnutrition. Unfortunately, the Yemeni child Amal Hussein died a few days after her horrific photo was published.

Humanitarian aid is essential during times of armed conflict when civilians, including children, are in urgent need of aid. The denial of humanitarian aid impedes free or timely access to humanitarian aid for persons in

need.

The denial of humanitarian aid access to civilians, including children, and the attacks on workers in the humanitarian field who provide aid to children are prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Protocols. This violation may be described as a crime against humanity or a war crime. Moreover, it is one of the principles of Customary International Law.

During the report period, the Houthi militia committed several continuing violations of the laws of war, including the denial of humanitarian convoys to access civilians who are trapped in the besieged towns and villages, adding a more severe siege to vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and the sick and injured people in those areas.

The Houthi militia also prevented trucks carrying humanitarian aid from reaching areas providing shelter for displaced persons in the districts of Taizz Governorate and areas in other governorates. The number of displaced persons was estimated at millions and most of them were children and women. The Houthi militia seized other trucks carrying humanitarian aid for civilians in the areas under the control of the Houthis, including Sana'a, Amran, Hajjah, Al Mahweet and some areas of Al-Jawf, and then they sold them in the markets and took the money.

In Taizz, a number of humanitarian aid workers and medical staff were killed by direct shooting as they were moving in streets in the areas militarily controlled by snipers belonging to the Houthi and Saleh groups who were present in houses, hotels, residential buildings and government institutions in those streets. For example, the human rights activist Reham Al-Badr and her colleagues were targeted intentionally by snipers who targeted the aid teams on February 9, 2018 in Al-Karifat area, east of Taizz.

The government and other parties accused the Houthi militia of obstructing the arrival of humanitarian aid to civilians as a method and strategy in their wars from the beginning of their armed movements in the Dammaj District in Sa'dah Governorate until they reached Aden and Taiz in early 2015.

The armed groups of the Houthis and Saleh seized these cities during 2015 and 2016 and the city continues to be besieged at the time of writing this report.

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, visited Taizz in early 2017 and issued a statement explaining the disaster. He called for an end to the siege imposed on the city and for access to aid and assistance, especially the basic needs of the civilians such as domestic gas, medicines, oxygen for hospitals and the essential foodstuffs.

A report issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said, "There are about 4.5 million people in need of emergency shelter or essential household items, including the displaced persons, their host communities and the early returnees. These needs arise as a result of the displacement related to the continuing conflict." The report also confirmed that 1.6 million children were displaced from the war zones.

According to the United Nations agencies, the population of Taizz was 600,000 before the war. The armed conflict that began in March 2015 resulted in the escape of two thirds of the population and the number of those who stayed was between 175,000 and 200,000.

This indicates that approximately 184,000 children from Taizz were deprived of their right to education, health and housing and they were at risk of diseases, epidemics and psychological shocks. In addition to the effects of siege, the lives of these children were badly affected during the wave of displacement and deportation that the city witnessed after the denial of humanitarian access and the stealing of aid by the Houthi and Saleh militia.

In October 2018, the UN Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Yemen confirmed that the armed conflict in Yemen caused the massive displacement of civilians, particularly in the governorates of Taizz, Hajjah and Sana'a, where about 3.27 million persons, half of them children, were displaced internally in Yemen, an increase of 650,000 persons compared to the situation in December 2015.

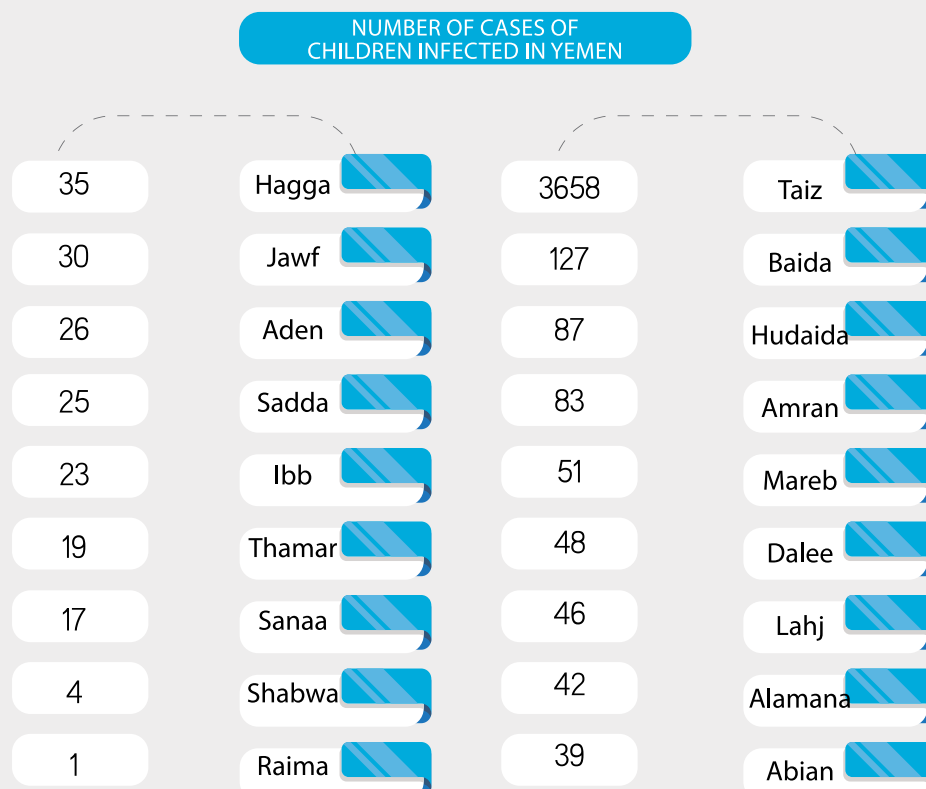
According to the population indicators for the latest population survey, the number of children under 15 is about 46% of the total population. Therefore, the wave of displacement caused by the war prevented 1,770 million children from accessing their right to food, medicine, education, housing and play. In addition, they were exposed to several risks and psychological crises.

In his statement in Beirut, Joe Stork, the Deputy Director for Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, said, "The Houthis deny access to essential items by Taizz residents simply because they live in

areas under the control of the opposition forces." He added; "If the confiscation of property from civilians is illegal, taking their food and medical supplies is extremely cruel".

He confirmed that 16 cases occurred during the period from September 13, 2015 to January 9, 2016. Houthi gunmen at security checkpoints prevented civilians from taking various items into the besieged Taizz, including fruits, vegetables, cooking gas, vaccinations against diseases, containers for dialysis and oxygen cylinders, and they also confiscated some of these items.

A report by UNICEF stated that 9.6 million Yemeni children needed humanitarian aid to survive, and 2.2 million children were malnourished, including 462,000 children were severely malnourished. This number doubled by 200% compared to the period before the invasion of the Houthi militia and Saleh forces of the capital Sana'a on September 21, 2014.



# ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN

The abduction of children is defined as the unauthorized taking of minors (children under 18 years) from their natural parents or legally appointed guardians.

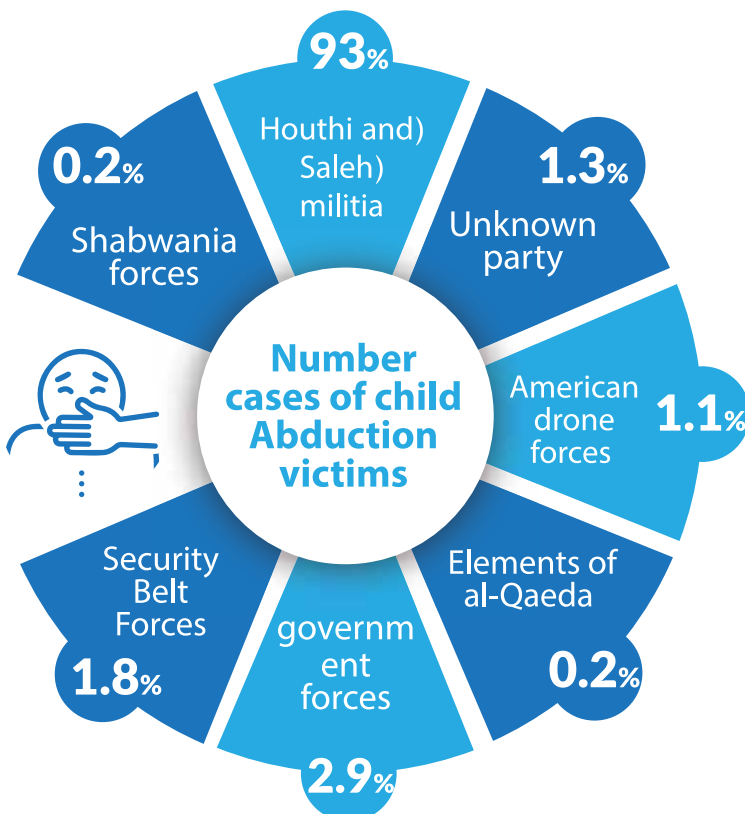
The crimes of abduction, detention and concealment of children, which occur during armed conflict, are considered war crimes. In addition, the widespread or systematic practice of enforced concealment constitutes a crime against humanity that entails the penalties prescribed by law.

During armed conflict, children are abducted from their homes, schools and refugee camps. Abductions often result in other violations such as forced labor, sexual slavery and recruitment. Moreover, a lot of children are trafficked across borders. The Houthi and Saleh militia used this practice to intimidate and retaliate against civilians as a means of psychological pressure on their parents for political purposes or as a form of insult and revenge

on them. Their main purpose was to recruit them into the militia.

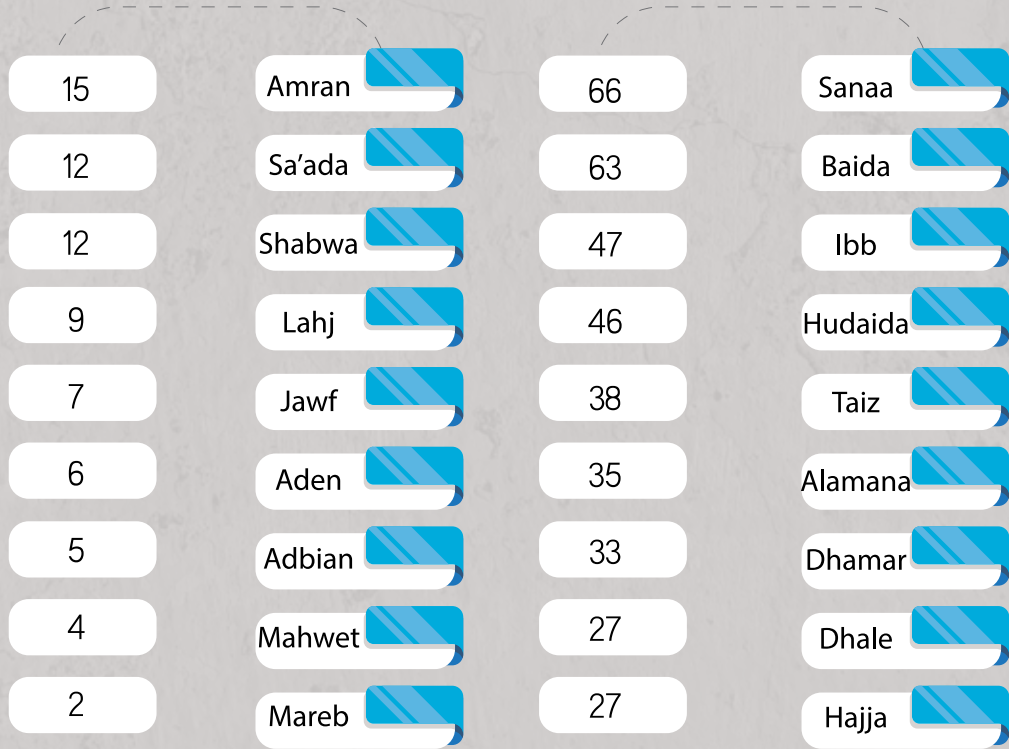
During the period covered in this report, children of Yemen were subjected to several abduction crimes to extort their families and demand ransom to return them. The abduction is sometimes for the purpose of trafficking, prostitution or sale of their organs.

During the period from September 21, 2014 to September 21, 2018, Rights Radar monitored 487 cases of abduction, arrest and concealment of children under the legal age, including 469 violations committed by the Houthi and Saleh militias. It also monitored 13 cases of arrest for children between the ages of 16 and 18 by the government authorities, and 5 cases were committed by unidentified parties. In addition, 19 cases of torture of children occurred in the Houthi and Saleh detention camps.





A TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF ABDUCTION, DISAPPEARANCE AND TORTURE OF CHILDREN



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ONE: HOUTHİ GROUP:

- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to stop its repeated violations against children by targeting populated areas.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to put an end to the recruitment or placement of children on the front lines.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to stop abducting and using children as hostages.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to stop using schools for military purposes or targeting their students for the recruitment and mobilization to extremist ideology.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to stop the siege of civilians in Taiz and some of its directorates and allow its inhabitants, especially children, to move freely.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to provide the adequate humanitarian aid to those who are affected by the war in their areas of control and not to delay or stop the issuance of the passage permits for the humanitarian convoys or using the humanitarian aid for the recruitment of children or as a pressure on their families to get them join the militia.
- Rights Radar calls on the Houthi group to release all those who are abducted in its prisons, especially children, and stop using them as hostages or human shields.

### TWO: SAUDI-LED COALITION:

- Rights Radar calls on the Arab Coalition in Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia, to stop its air raids on civilian areas, especially the places where children are likely to be, avoid the mistakes of air raids against civilians and children in Yemen, compensate the victims and take measures to ensure that such air raids will not be repeated.
- Rights Radar calls on the Arab Coalition in Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia, to take its responsibility to enforce the laws that inhibit and criminalize the recruitment of children and evacuate from its supporting camps any child under the legal age.
- Rights Radar calls on the Arab Coalition in Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia, to give

special treatment to the child captives, help them to overcome the psychological shock and reunite them with their families in circumstances that do not force them to return to the militia again.

- Rights Radar calls on the Arab Coalition in Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia, to quickly issue traffic permits for aid ships and provide assistance for the rapid access of aid to the affected persons.

### **THREE: YEMEN'S GOVERNMENT:**

- Rights Radar calls on the Yemeni Government to fulfill its constitutional and legal duties to prevent children from being exposed to risks and protect them from the repeated attacks in the areas under their control in Yemen.
- Rights Radar calls on the Yemeni Government to strengthen measures to protect children from the dangers of recruitment.
- Rights Radar calls on the Yemeni Government to prevent targeting educational facilities or hospitals and secure roads for children, teachers, patients, doctors and ambulance teams.
- Rights Radar calls on the Yemeni Government to provide adequate assistance for the access of humanitarian aid to the affected persons and not to delay the issuance of traffic permits for aid convoys.

### **FOUR: UNITED NATIONS AND AID ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Rights Radar calls on The United Nations and the international community to pressure the various parties of the armed conflict in Yemen to spare children from the scourge of war and keep them away from targeting by any form of violations.
- Rights Radar calls on the humanitarian organizations and the United Nations agencies in Yemen to intensify their activities in the various Yemeni areas to contribute to addressing the effects of the war on children.



# RIGHTS RADAR

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## WHO WE ARE?

Rights Radar foundation is a civil society organization for Human Rights, Non-Profit and Non-Governmental organization for monitoring, promoting and defending Human rights in the Arab world.

Founded by some Arab human rights defenders, and activists. Allocated for monitoring, documenting, and reporting violations against Human Rights, as well as providing advocacy, and legal support for victims and capacity building for human rights activists. It is focusing on all topics and areas of human rights, including freedom of expression, media and press freedom, women's rights, children's rights, disability rights, refugee rights, rights to justice.

Rights Radar working through a wide and professional network of reporters and monitors in the ground in most of the areas covered by its activities, using up-to-date techniques of monitoring and documenting human rights cases.

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## OUR OBJECTIVES:

1. Monitoring and documenting violations against human rights in the Arab World.
2. Providing advocacy and legal support for victims of human rights' violations.
3. Networking and partnership with human rights organizations.
4. Capacity building and leadership developing for human rights activists.

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## OUR VISSION:

Excellence in monitoring, documenting, and advocacy of human rights in the Arab world.

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## OUR MISSION:

A non-profit human rights foundation to defend Arab human rights and advocate their essential rights through monitoring and documenting violations, issuing statements and reports, networking and partnership with regional and international human rights organizations, as well as creating training and capacity building opportunities for human rights activists and leaders.

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## OUR VALUES

1. Responsibility
2. Credibility.
3. Independency.
4. Transparency.



# OUR PROGRAMS

## MONITORING

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Rights Radar regularly monitors the human rights status and abuses in the Arab world, through local qualified monitors and reporters working to world-class standards and using cutting-edge techniques, as well as through collaborations with local human rights organizations that work in the same field with the same quality of work.

## DOCUMENTING

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Rights Radar documents human rights abuses committed by various parties, individual or collective, across the Arab world. Through a variety of approaches, we obtain material proof and documented evidence of the abuses of human rights to be used to bring the perpetrators to justice.

## ADVOCACY

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As part of our mission, Rights Radar provides advocacy and legal support, both material and moral support, for victims of human rights abuses in the Arab world, thanks to our capacity and expertise, and in collaboration with international organizations with complementary programs and aims.

## NETWORKING

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We achieve our objectives and goals through collaborating with a wide network of local, regional and international human rights organizations. Sharing experiences and working together, we drive outcomes and defend human rights through collective action and large-scale campaigns.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

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As well as defending human rights, Rights Radar is committed to training the human rights activists working as internal staff members as well as external organizations that share the same goal of defending human rights. Capacity building is a major part of our program and mission to improve human rights.



# FIELDS OF FOCUS

Rights Radar believes the right to freedom of expression and justice, rights for women, children, people with disabilities and refugees are fundamental issues and represent the core topics of our work and activities.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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We advocate for freedom of expression to advance media freedom and public liberties, and promote its potential to play a vital role in developing democracy and protecting the public interest. We believe that democracy will not be fully achieved unless freedom of expression is guaranteed as a basic right.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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Rights Radar promotes women's empowerment and supports their vital role and participation in society. We believe that society cannot reach its full potential unless women enjoy the same equal rights and opportunities as men, including education, health care, jobs, etc.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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We are working to enhance children's basic rights and assist them to fully enjoy their rights, including education, health care and protection. We look to children as our bright future, and this dream will not come true unless children are integrated fully into social development and public policies.



## **DISABILITY RIGHTS**

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Rights Radar promotes the empowerment of people with disabilities and supports their integration and participation in society. We want to see equality, where people with disabilities enjoy all their fundamental rights and opportunities, including education, jobs, health care, etc.

## **REFUGEE RIGHTS**

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We work to enhance refugee rights and support them to be smoothly integrated into society and granted their humanitarian rights with no discrimination. We believe that refugees should have access to basic rights, such as education, health care and job opportunities.

## **RIGHT TO JUSTICE**

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We promote the values of justice within society to grant fair prosecution for victims and prisoners. We believe that life will not be protected unless justice, law and order govern the behavior of all people from top to bottom, and the right to justice becomes a fundamental right for all.



# RIGHTS RADAR

## YEMEN: HELL OF CHILDHOOD

REPORT ON THE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS  
DURING WARTIME

2014 – 2018

FEBRUARY 2019

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