



# The Monthly Briefing

March 2021

## March in Review

- On March 1<sup>st</sup>, our partners, the Governments of Sweden & Switzerland, co-hosted the High-level Pledging Event to fund the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan in Yemen. Donors pledged nearly \$1.67 billion, a figure 50% below than the initial goal of \$3.8 billion. UN Secretary-General António Guterres [described](#) the underfunding gap “disappointing,” calling donors to increase aid. “Cutting aid is a death sentence,” H.E. added.



- During the event, PM Dr. Maeen Abdulmalik:
  - Appreciated the commitment and support of donors;
  - Called humanitarian organizations to make efficient & transparent use of aid and halt its unacceptable diversion by the Houthi militia;
  - Urged donors to channel foreign currency injections via the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) in Aden to reduce economic hardships for the great majority of Yemenis by stabilizing the Riyal & reducing exchange rate, citing CBY’s contribution in 2019;

- Highlighted the threats posed by Houthi militia’s offensive on Marib, a governorate that [hosts](#) 7.5% of population, including more than 2 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Most of the IDPs were displaced by the Houthi militia.

- After the Houthi militia fabricated a fuel crisis in their areas, Safer Department for Gas affirmed uninterrupted supply of gas nationwide, including to Houthi-held areas. In January and February 2021, Safer [dispatched](#) a minimum of 2663 gas trailers to Houthi-held areas at the local price of 2,300 YER. Instead of selling the gas cylinder at 3,100-3,500 YER inclusive of transport costs, the Houthi militia sells most of supply in black markets for a price around or above 10,000 YER.
- On International Women’s Day, the Embassy [launched](#) a special report “Basic Women’s Rights Under Houthi Crackdown: Between a Radical Moral Order and Heinous Systematic Oppression” exposing grave Houthi militia’s violations against Yemeni women. You may [download](#) the report from the Embassy’s website.
- SAM for Rights and Liberties, in its report ‘Women in Yemen: Protracted Suffering and Appalling Abuses,’ [documented](#) over 4,000 abuses against women. 70% were carried by the Houthis alone, including illegal detention, torture, sexual assault, rape, forced recruitment and extortion. Several Houthi leaders were involved, [including](#) Sultan Zabin, Mohammed al-Hadi, Abdul-Hakim al-Khaiwani, Motlaq al-Marani.

- Despite unanimous international [condemnations](#) of Houthi attacks on Marib, which started immediately after the U.S. declared intent to revoke the Houthi FTO designation, the Houthi militia:

- Continued large-scale attacks and deployed military reinforcements;
- Indiscriminately fired an estimated 30 ballistic missiles on residential neighborhoods in Marib, [killing](#) and injuring dozens of civilians;
- [Displaced](#) more than 14,000 IDPs again as of March 4, with UN agencies warning that a minimum of 385,000 IDPs face a serious risk of displacement;
- Deliberately targeted IDP camps, including al-Khair, al-Mail and al-Swaida camps, destroying dozens of tents, injuring scores of IDPs and forcing hundreds of IDPs to be displaced for the third, fourth or fifth time.



- Marib Deputy Governor [met](#) with UNOCHA Coordinator in Aden and appealed to UN agencies and International Organizations (IOs) to urgently act, mobilize resources and help millions of IDPs. H.E. Abd-Rabbu Meftah urged OCHA to visit Marib governorate and take action.
- On March 7, the Houthis “caused the death and injury of scores of African migrants by starting a deadly fire in an overcrowded detention facility in Sana’a,” Mwatana for Human Rights [reported](#).

- A survivor testified to the organization:

*“One of the guards came up on the ladder and I heard them saying “Ready.” They started throwing projectiles emitting smoke from the top windows of the ward. We only heard the sounds of explosions and a lot of smoke. We tried to escape but the ward doors were locked, and we were cramped inside. I could hear the sound of explosions and the sounds of my friends groaning...but I could not help anyone.”*



- Contrary to the inhumane Houthi treatment of African migrants (including by even recruiting many of them to fight the Government), Marib local authority [employed](#) an estimated 650 African migrants over the past 3 years, offering them a route to life with dignity and respect. Yemen is not the Houthi forms of terrorism, nor the Houthi militias can be all Yemen.



- In Aden, the Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) [met](#) with the Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and discussed NRC's activities in Lahj, al-Dale'a and Taiz and called NRC to visit and increase urgent support for Marib.
- FM Dr. Ahmed Awadh bin Mubarak [paid](#) a visit to Doha, restored full diplomatic relations with Qatar, raised the flag of the Republic of Yemen at the Embassy and met with high-level officials.
- The Foreign Ministry [protested](#) the meeting between the International Committee for the Red Cross Representative's (ICRC) chief, Katerina Ritz, and Iran's smuggled representative to the Houthis, Hassan Irlu – the Commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in Sana'a.
- In an e-meeting with the Head of International Cooperation in the EU Delegation to Yemen, the Planning and International Cooperation Minister, H.E. Dr. Wa'id Batheeb [appreciated](#) continued support of the EU, discussed recovery priorities and called partners to apply pressure on the Houthi militias to halt stealing aid and intervening in relief efforts of humanitarian IOs.
- The National Yemen Army [removed](#) more than 2,200 Houthi-laid landmines under the Saudi Project MASAM, the Director of the National Mine Action Program Amin al-Alqeeli said.
- In a phone call with the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy H.E. Josep Borrell, FM Dr. Bin Mubarak:
  - ✚ [Reaffirmed](#) the commitment of the Government to a sustainable, just peace;
  - ✚ Briefed Borrell about the Houthi offensive on Marib, the stakes at hand, current initiatives, support required and the humanitarian crisis.
- The National Armed Forces captured Houthi-recruited child soldiers in Marib. The local authority then immediately and voluntarily coordinated repatriation to their families with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

– consistent with the values of the Government of Yemen. Alarming, the Houthi militia [recruited](#) more than 30,000 children as child soldiers since September 2014 – in clear violation of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Humanitarian Law.

- On March 14, the Houthis [fired](#) a ballistic missile on Tareq Bin Zeyad school in al-Kadaha, Taiz, killing and injuring dozens. The Presidency of the Parliament condemned the terrorist Houthi attack and expressed concern toward the silence and failure of the international community to take credible protection measures, which in turn emboldens the Houthis to continue crimes against civilians, including IDPs.



- Six years ago, the Houthis in cooperation with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on March 19, 2015, used warplanes to air [bomb](#) the Presidential Palace in Aden. They wanted to assassinate President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi before the Arab Coalition intervened. Drawing on the patterns of using ballistic missiles against residential neighborhoods in Marib and Taiz and warplanes against officials, the Houthis would have not hesitated to use warplanes to attack civilians had they maintained airpower.
- During the Ordinary 54<sup>th</sup> Round of Arab Health Ministers, the Health Minister [called](#) Arab counterparts to support Yemen in fighting the consequences of COVID-19 and other epidemics,

including by rehabilitating health infrastructure to timely deliver public services.

- The Information Minister [decried](#) continuous Houthi military operations on Marib and Saudi Arabia, using Iranian-made ballistic missiles and drones, based on Erlo's orders. *"The Iranian regime's decision of assigning the so-called Hassan Erlo, officer of al-Quds Corps, as a military ruler of Sana'a has initiated a new phase of Iranian interventions in Yemen,"* H.E. said.
- The GCC Ministerial Council [condemned](#) terrorizing Houthi attacks against civilians in Marib, and Saudi Arabia. They reaffirmed support to the Government of Yemen and expressed support for a politically negotiated settlement based on the three references of peace: the GCC initiative, the Outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference & UNSC Resolution 2216.



- On March 20, the UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator William David Gressly [paid](#) a visit to Marib, met with the Governor & local officials and toured al-Sweida, al-Gefaina and al-Rawdah IDP camps.
  - ✚ Gressly confirmed that procedures to establish an advanced humanitarian center in Marib will be ready soon. This will facilitate and scale up the work of the humanitarian cluster and extend support to many IDPs.
- On March 22, the Supreme National Emergency Committee for Coronavirus [declared](#) COVID-19

emergency in view of the second wave, instructing local authorities to adopt restrictive measures and the public to exercise self-restraint.

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates [welcomed](#) the Saudi initiative in Yemen to revive the political trajectory, in coordination with UN and U.S. Special Envoys.
- In a phone call with PM Maeen, U.S. State Secretary Anthony Blinken *"[applauded](#) government's response to KSA initiative and its flexibility in responding to the humanitarian situation."* In this regard, PM Maeen praised the *"partnership with the U.S. in humanitarian, political, security and counterterrorism fields and stressed that support to Yemen's government is critical to achieve economic stability and provide services to dilute the humanitarian crisis."*
- Michael Knights & Alex Almeida of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy [argued](#) for *"Saving the Yemen Peace Process by Blunting the Houthi Push for Marib."* Also, Katherine Zimmerman of the American Enterprise Institute & Bradley Bowman of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies [contended](#) that *"Biden Can't Bring Peace to Yemen While Iran Keeps Sending Weapons,"* calling to urgently dismantle illicit arms transfer chain to the Houthi militia.
- The UN Panel of Experts (PoE) [admitted](#) that their ill-examined conclusions against CBY and the Government of Yemen were flawed, misleading and baseless. CBY leadership privately and quietly refuted all allegations in a professional manner. As a result, the PoE person in-charge of the financial section, Mourad Baly, had to resign for misleading UN PoE.
- In an uncirculated report, the UN PoE [concluded](#) that the Houthi rebels, who denied responsibility, are responsible for the cabinet missile assassination attempt at Aden International Airport, which killed dozens of people and injured more than a hundred civilians. The finding [confirms](#) that of the Interior Ministry: On December 30, the Houthis fired three surface-to-

surface ballistic missiles from two different locations in Taiz and Dhamar governorates, causing collateral damage.

✚ In late March, the Commander of the Sixth Military Region Major General Amin al-Waeli – known also as the Commander of the Desert – died while defending the governorate of Marib against Houthi incursions. Shuttling between al-Jawf and Marib frontlines, the patriotic martyr – who suffered from a **serious cancer disease**, rejected to focus on his medication overseas and prioritized countering the supremacist theocratic cancer inside Yemen. Despite the odds, Maj. Gen. al-Waeli upheld the military honor, stood by his constitutional duties through thick and thin, and left for the Guards of the Yemeni Republic and Yemen's immediate neighborhood memorable words:

✚ *“In the footsteps of the free people, we are going to defeat the tyranny [in reference to the Houthi militia that rebelled against the state].”*

✚ *“We are fighting on behalf of all Muslims so that Khamenei [of Iran] is not said to rule the root of the Arabs [Yemen].”*



■ On March 31<sup>st</sup>, The Ministers of Health and International Cooperation, accompanied by WHO and UNICEF representatives, received the first shipment of 360,000 COVID-19 vaccine jabs at Aden International Airport. This consignment is Yemen's first and part of the initial [allocation](#) of 2.3 million COVID-19 vaccine doses made by COVAX vaccine-sharing facility for Yemen. Back in February, Prime Minister Dr. Maeen Abdulmalik and the leadership of the Health Ministry discussed vaccination strategies, as well as ways and means to enhance health infrastructure and secure further vaccines to reduce the disparities between conflict-affected states and developed nations in this file.

■ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [announced](#) a fuel package worth \$422 million, via the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen, to support power generation nationwide as the Muslim World gears up for the holy month of Ramadan.