



# AL SALEH DETENTION CENTER

Rights report documenting the treatment of arbitrary detainees and the forcibly disappeared, including brutal torture and harsh treatment, in the Al Saleh Detention Center that is controlled by the Houthi militias in the Taiz governorate

Geneva - Jan 2020







[www.samrl.org](http://www.samrl.org)



**In summary, one of the detainees told SAM:**

“Some of the detainees in the prison were sane and lost their minds, while other detainees had lost their minds before they went in and came out sane.”

# This report

documents **extremely harsh and cruel stories**, so if you cannot bear to read these painful statements, we recommend that you **do not continue reading.**



# Dedication

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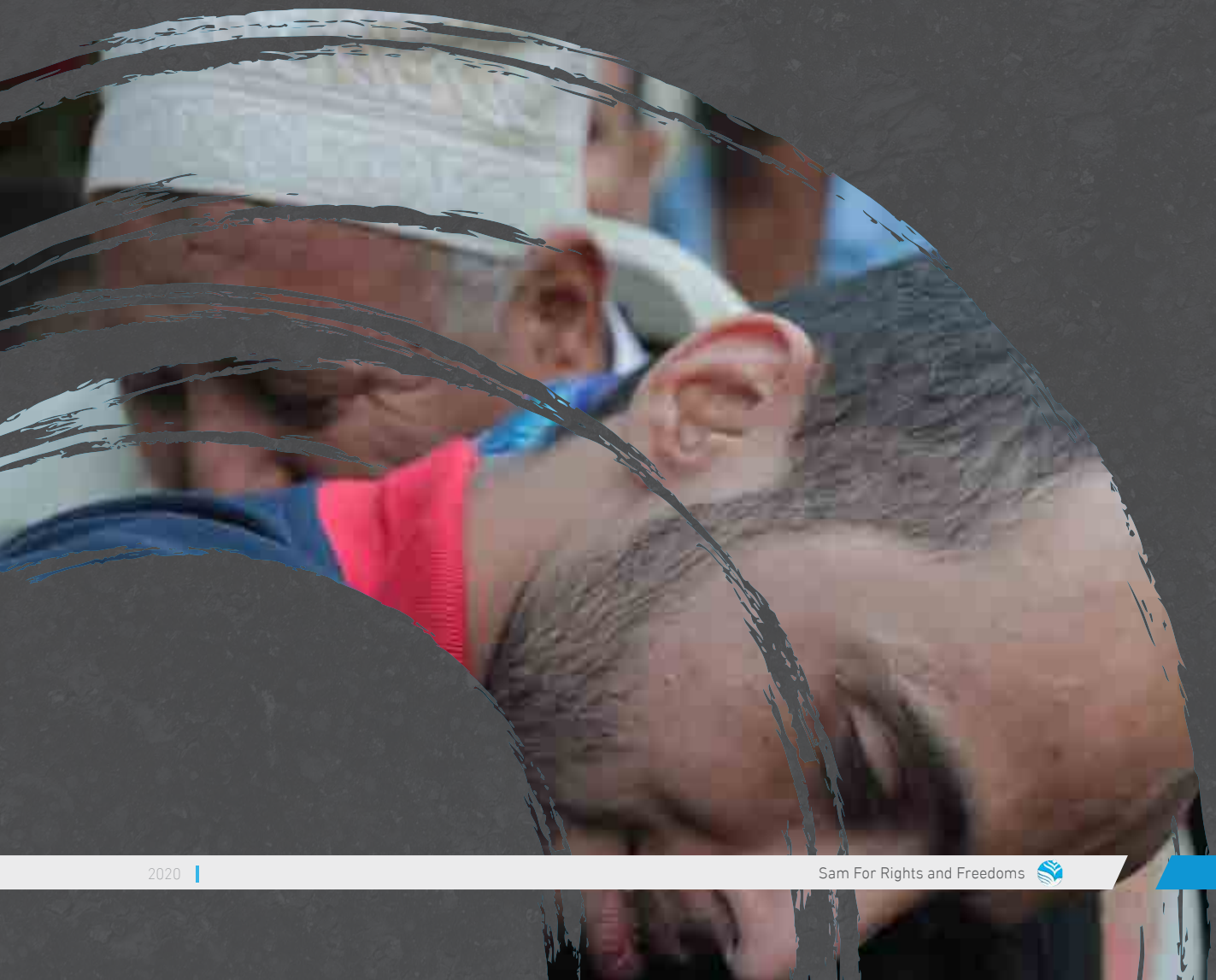
We dedicate this report to the soul of a marginalized civilian, Nashwan Muqbil Saif, who went through torture in the Al Saleh City Prison due to his refusal to be forced to fight in the ranks of the Houthis. Eight months after he was released, he died due to the injuries and illnesses that he got during the torture.

Nashwan was a great hero who refused to submit to forced recruitment among Houthis militia forces, while many tribal sheikhs, officers, senior merchants, and dignitaries acquiesced to them, and rescued themselves and provided many innocent souls and money.



## THE AL SALEH PRISON

A place where horror resides, and stories that have yet to be uncovered, in the past, young people dreamed of getting an apartment or a room to help them start their futures in this residential area. In a state where everything would be named after those in power, the residential area turned into a prison and terrifying nightmare, a reality that was worse than any imagination or horror story. Inside it was a shell , and outside it the remains of the Bastille. There are many times throughout human history where people do not invent names or terms consciously, especially when the place is one of the labels that has imposed itself, forcefully, on our memory, and we have not been able to do anything but to write it down, like an honest scribe of events. This brutal prison is one of the most horrifying parts of the memories of the victims , and there needs to be work to record this incident as one of the darkest and most oppressive moments in human history.



# An Introduction on Taiz

The Taiz governorate is located to the south of the capital, Sana'a, and it is around 256 kilometers from it. The governorate has the highest population of any governorate, according to the results of the 2004 population census, with a population of 2,393,425 people, making up 12.16% of the total population of the Republic of Yemen.<sup>(1)</sup> Taiz has been going through an armed conflict since April 2015. After the Houthi militias invaded the capital, Sana'a, taking it from the government of Yemen on 21 September 2014, with the help of military forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, they expanded and took control of most of the governorates. They started expanding militarily towards the Taiz governorate, where they were met by popular forces and local fighters who formed into what is now called the Popular Resistance. The severity of the conflict escalated and expanded to include all of the city of Taiz and the different districts in it.

Taiz is described as being the cultural capital of Yemenis, and the governorate is strategically important because it overlooks the Bab El

Mandeb Strait, one of the most important straits in international shipping. The Mocha Port, which is a historically famous port, is also in the governorate, making the governorate important. This importance can be clearly seen through the vicious and expanding conflict that has been going on for four years. This has caused many catastrophes and pain, and the issue of private prisons, arbitrary detention, forcible disappearance, and torture have been the most prominent ones.

Due to the armed conflict, Taiz has been divided into three parts. The first part is what is known as the capital of the governorate, which is made up of the districts of Al Mudhaffar, Al Qahirah, and Salah, expanding into the districts in the southern rural areas until the Al Turbah district.<sup>(2)</sup> This area is under the control of government forces. The second part are the areas to the east of the city of Taiz, and to the north, which extend to the borders with the Lahj, Dhale, and Ibb governorate, and they are controlled by the Houthi militias.<sup>(3)</sup> This is in addition to the western part of the city of Taiz, until the area

(1) National Information Center in the Presidency: <http://www.yemen-nic.info/gover/taiz/brife/>

(2) This includes the districts of Saber Al Mawadim, Mashraah Wa Hadnan, Al Misrakh, as well as a part of Jabal Hibshi and the districts of Al Maafir, Al Shamaytain, and Al Mawasit

(3) This includes the districts of Khadir, Al Silw, Hayfan, Sami', Mawiyah, Al Taiziyah, Sharab Al Rawnah and Al Salam, a part of Jabal Hibshi, and large parts of Maqbannah





of Al Barh on the international highway linking Taiz and Hudaydah. The third part is made up of the four districts on the western coast of the governorate<sup>(4)</sup>, where the Bab El Mandeb strait and the strategic Mocha Port are located. These areas are controlled by irregular military forces that are supported and finance by the United Arab Emirates<sup>(5)</sup>, led by Brigadier Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh, son of the former president's brother and commander of his guard.

Since the beginning of 2015, the "Popular Resistance", which is allied with the government of Yemen and supported by the countries of the Arab Coalition, have waged war against the Houthi militias, which are supported by the forces of the former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. The Popular Resistance was structured in the end of 2016 into regular forces under the command of the government of Yemen, and they continued their war with the Houthi forces after the breakup of the Houthi-Saleh alliance<sup>(6)</sup> in the end of 2017. Forces allied with the UAE started their military operations in the beginning of January 2017 to liberate the coast and the western districts of Taiz, aiming to regain control of these areas from the Houthi and Saleh forces.

The parties to the conflict in Taiz have committed a number of different violations at various levels, and the most prominent violations include the use of private prisons, in which brutal means are used to demean and humiliate and violate the individual rights of the population. Hundreds of activists, opponents, opposition figures, and civilians were tortured in these private prisons. The Al Saleh City Prison was the most prominent one among these prisons, and it has earned its horrifying reputation due to the harsh treatment of the detainees and the many prisoners who have disappeared in it.

"SAM" had documented the cases of more than 51 private prisons in the Taiz governorate,<sup>(7)</sup> including 29 prisons that were controlled by the Houthi militias, 9 private prisons controlled by government forces, 9 private prisons controlled by the UAE-allied forces on the west coast, and 4 private prisons controlled by extremist groups before government forces were able to close these prisons down in 2018 after taking control of the residential neighborhoods and buildings that they were holed up in<sup>(8)</sup>, and discovered some mass graves, some of them belong to soldiers who were detained and died under torture, or executed.<sup>(9)</sup>

(4) The districts of Dhubab, Bab Al Mandab, Mocha, Al Waziyah, and Mawza'

(5) Al Amaliqah Forces and the National Resistance Forces that are led by Tareq Saleh, the nephew of former president Saleh, as well as the Elite Forces and the Tehama Resistance Forces

(6) RT Arabic, The Killing of Ali Abdullah Saleh by the Houthis, <https://rb.gy/uackub>

(7) SAM Demands the Closure of All Illegal Detention Centers in Yemen. Statement on September 7, 2017 <https://samrl.org/L.php?l=e.10.A.c.1.74.77.3692.php/Close-all-Illegal-Detention-Centers-in-Yemen>

(8) Rudaw. Yemeni Army: Detention of 21 Wanted Individuals in a Security Campaign in Taiz. <http://www.rudaw.net/arabic/middle-east/26042018>

(9) Alkawq Post: <https://almawqepost.net/news/37013>

The phenomenon of illegal and private prisons is a worrying phenomenon in Yemen. The parties to the conflict have purposefully established illegal and secret prisons to disappear their opponents and punish them. SAM has worked, since it was established, to uncover these prisons and show their true brutality to the local and international public. Among these prisons that have become known for their brutality and torture is the Al Saleh City Prison, which was created by the Houthi militias after they took control of large parts of the Taiz governorate, along with the Aden, Lahj, Abyan, and Dhale governorates, in the beginning of 2015.

From listening to the statements of the victims, the reader discovers the horror of the prison, which might be as bad as the Tadmur Prison in Syria or the Bastille in France. Therefore, it became the duty of SAM to show, to local and foreign public opinion, the reality of this prison and the horror and ugliness that the detainees were being subject to, including things that are truly indescribable.

# Methodology

The Al Saleh Prison report is a right report and is a part of a series of reports and figures that are issued by SAM on prisons in Yemen, and it is a result of efforts and work that has accumulated over the past four years. In order to get closer to the truth, the team has researched and investigated a number of incidents, listening to the statements of 27 victims and eyewitnesses. The team has also met 3 neutral mediators who were able to visit the prison as a part of efforts to look into and negotiate the release of the prisoners there. These mediators were able to meet and talk to the detainees. The team has also followed up with the information that has been shown on the media, including that shown on Houthi media, as well as the decisions that the Houthis have made regarding prisons. It has gotten important testimony that was written by one of the members of the General Amnesty committee that was formed by the Houthis relating to the conditions of the Al Saleh Prison and the violations that are taking place inside it.

SAM has a specialized and professional team in the Taiz governorate that is working in very difficult and very complicated conditions. During its work in the governorate, this team has been able to network with a number of civil society organizations. It has also communicated with the entities and leaders of parties involved in the armed conflict, which has enabled it to know undisclosed goings on in the special prisons of the parties to the conflict.

We tried, in this report, to shine a light on this prison specifically because it is one of the most dangerous prisons that was established during the armed conflict in Yemen. This prison is a complex of prisons that no international or local organizations, or any international team of experts, has been able to visit.

The report relies on the substantive aspect based on narrating the incidents and following up with the events, and a large part of it has also focused on uncovering and disclosing the crimes that are happening in the Al Saleh Prison, as well as the secrecy surrounding it.

SAM has been keen to find out the number of prisoners who have been detained in the prison since it was established in the end of 2014, as well as the number of prisoners who died in the prison because of the harsh treatment, but it was unable to determine these figures accurately, as this prison has a very high level of security precautions.

SAM listened to the statements of the members of the negotiation committees for the exchange of detainees and prisons, and, from them, it got estimates for the number of prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison. The figures that are included in the report are very small compared to the number of detainees who have been detained in the prison throughout the period that it has been used and until the writing of this report.



## Legal Background

Yemen has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights brings up those who are imprisoned or are being deprived of their freedoms, where human dignity is taken from them and they are not considered humans, and it has stated that the prison system must take into account the treatment of the prisoners. The main goal of the treatment of prisoners should be to rehabilitate them and reintroduce them to society. The Convention against Torture required that each state that is a member to it ensure that all forms of torture are considered crimes that are punishable by criminal law, and this applies to criminalizing any individual carrying out actions relating to torture or any other attempt that is considered complicity or participation in torture, or protecting the violators.

International treaties and conventions have given rights to prisoners that cannot be repealed or taken from them. They have the right to healthcare, they have the right to not catch illnesses or diseases in prison, and the prisoners also have the right to be protected from dangerous conditions in the prison. The prisoners can also expect to be protected from physical or sexual violence, and these agreements, including the Convention Against Torture, have brought up the issue of protecting prisoners and dealing with those who are deprived of their freedom with humanity, respect, and personal dignity. They have required that these individuals are protected from violence or being forced to give information, and they have also required providing healthcare services, safe and healthy places for all of the prisoners to live in, and enough medicine, as well as preventative healthcare measures, first aid, methods to monitor the spread of contagious diseases, and following up with medical treatment.

International humanitarian law and its customary foundations have also shown a number of principles that must be provided in the areas where people are detained, and the protection that needs to be provided to prisoners. The Economic and Social Council that was created by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has made a number of recommendations relating to the minimum principles for treatment of prisoners in 1955, including principles relating to the areas that they are being detained in. There are recommendations relating to providing tools and supplies for the rooms of the prisoners, ensuring that the environment of the prisons are taken into account, especially ventilation and the minimum space for each prisoner, and light and heating, or ensuring that the administration of the prison is providing a healthcare and nutrition system that is suitable for each prisoner. It also requires providing personal hygiene requirements and opportunities for education, as well as allowing communication with relatives, while providing sports equipment and means of recreation. There are also other rights that were recommendation by the United Nations in this declaration.

The testimony of the prisoners and their families, as well as those in the know about the Al Saleh Prison, who were interviewed by SAM, show that the Houthi militias are not providing the bare minimum of rights for the prisoners, and they are not adhering to the minimal principles that are required to be provided in prisons. In addition to that, they are using harsh means of dealing with the prisoners, including physical and psychological torture, that are in violation of international treaties and conventions that Yemen is a signatory to. These are the general principles that were created by the customary principles of international humanitarian law. This treatment by the Houthis is in violation of UN conventions and treaties on human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two international conventions. They are also using practices that target civilians in a manner that is also in violation of the rules of war, especially with regards to the protection of civilians from all dangers during conflict.

# Executive Summary

SAM documented some of the physical and psychological torture, as well as the harsh treatment, that the prisoners were subject to in the Al Saleh Prison. The report focused on this prison because it is one of the most dangerous prisons that are under the control of the Houthi militias in Yemen. This prison is made up of a complex of prisons, and it includes a number of specialized areas for each segment of prisoner. These divisions are based on criteria that the Houthis used when dividing the different groups of prisoners. The report also documented the secrecy surrounding the prison, getting information to uncover some of the secrets of the prison, its surroundings, and the people supervising it, as well as the violations and harsh treatment that are taking place inside it.

To prepare this report, the organization's team conducted 27 interviews with victims, witnesses, and the relatives of the victims. It also got three statements from neutral mediators who were able to go into the Al Saleh Prison, and they gave their testimony to the organization.

The report is divided into two parts. The first part is made up of five sections. The first section is on the components of the prison. The report has concluded that the Al Saleh City, where the prison is located, is made up of 860 residential units distributed over 83 buildings, and the part that is allocated for the prison is made up of around 20 buildings. It is a group of prisons, name the Al Saleh Prison, and it is divided into five parts. The first part is the National Security Bureau prison, the second is the Preventative Security prison, the third is the security prison,

the fourth is the military prison, and the fifth is the Political Security Organization prison. These are names that the Houthis have given to the negotiation committees that are working to secure the release of the detainees in the prison, and there are a number of internal divisions for these prisons that are known to the prisoners that are based on how the Houthis have divided up the detainees. There is the “ISIS members” prison, the “reception” prison, the “criminal cases” prison, the “mujahideen” prison, the “sheikh prison”, which is for the mentally disabled, and the “Aden” prison.

The second section addresses the importance of this prison for the Houthis. In addition to it being used as a prison, it has also been used as the headquarters for the military and security command of the Houthis and the mediating field commanders in Taiz, as well as a residence for armed members. A part of it is used to store weapons and military equipment, and it is surrounded by a large area that was used to launch shells and missiles towards Taiz, in addition to some of the buildings in the city being used as government buildings for the governor and the executive offices that are under the control of the Houthis.

The Third section of the report is for those responsible for the “Al Saleh Prison”. There have been a number of direct and indirect supervisors who are mentioned and are responsible for the administration of the prison, the most prominent of which is the Houthi supervisor for Taiz city, Mansour Al Lakoumi, and the Commander of the Fourth Military Region who was appointed by the Houthis, Abdullatif Hamoud Al Mahdi. The report also talks about a number of names and entities that are linked to responsibilities for the prison, whether in its administration, carrying out abductions, torture, investigators, negotiations, or assistants for all of these activities.

In the fourth section, the report goes into what the member of the General Amnesty Committee that was formed by the Houthis has

concluded. He is a member of parliament, Ahmad Saif Hashid, and he has directly condemned the Houthis for the harsh treatment of the prisoners and unjustified arrests. The fifth section talks about the horror of the prison to the detainees, and the fear that is seen in them when just the name “Al Saleh” is mentioned in front of them, because of the terrifying experience that they went through.

With regards to the second part of the report on the prison, it is on the inside of the Al Saleh Prison and the types of violations that SAM has documented. The most prominent violations and crimes that were documented by the report are listed under five sections in this part of the report, and they are the physical and psychological torture of the prisoners, harsh treatment, like starving the detainees and not giving them enough food and different kinds of food, in addition to cleaning and hygiene supplies, a clean environment and ventilation not being available in most cases. The report also went into the reasons for the arrests, starting from punishing opponents and arrests with the purpose of forced conscription. There is also the use of the hostage system in arresting civilians for the purpose of holding them for ransom or to exchange them for Houthi fighters who have been captured by government forces.

Because of its importance to the Houthis, and due to the secrecy around it, and the different kinds of abductions and torture used in it, it has been a source of concern for SAM and its team in Taiz, and something that it has tried to clarify in this report. SAM has concluded that this prison is one of the most dangerous private prisons, one where there is a lot of oppression, and one that has caused a lot of horror and terror for the people of Taiz and the surrounding areas.

# **PART ONE**

## **What Is the Al Saleh Prison?**

The Al Saleh Prison is the topic of this report, and it is one of the most prominent and most dangerous private prisons controlled by the Houthi militias in Yemen. It was established by the Houthi militias when they took control of large parts of the Taiz governorate, along with the Aden, Lahj, Abyan, and Dhale governorates, in the beginning of 2015. It has become known by this name because of the residential area that it is in, which was still under construction. The Houthis have allocated some of its buildings for the detention and torture of people, and it is one of the private prisons that have been established by the parties to the conflict in Yemen.

The report focuses on a number of aspects relating to the prison, its components, its importance, and the individuals responsible for it, as well as an estimate of the number of prisoners who have gone through it. The report also includes the testimony of one of the members of the General Amnesty Committee of the Houthis and the horror in the prison for the detainees. These issues are all summarized in five parts, as follows:

## First: The Components of the Prison

The prison is located in the “Al Saleh” residential city, and it got this name from the area that it is in. This area is a residential area that is located at the eastern entrance of the Taiz governorate, and the residential city was established in 2009 during the reign of the former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. It was named after him. It is one of the residential projects that was being implemented by the government of Yemen in a number of governorates in order to provide housing for those with limited income. This city is made up of 860 residential units distributed in 83 buildings<sup>(1)</sup>, and they are all being used by the Houthi militias. A part of them was prepared as a private prison, in addition to residential units being used by Houthi commanders, and warehouses for the weapons. According to SAM's sources, the Houthis have allocated around 20 buildings in the Al Saleh City as prisons and administration for these prisons, 6 buildings for government buildings to administer the part of the governorate that is under their control, including the governorate building, 7 buildings for IDPs allied with them from some areas in Taiz, while the rest of the buildings are being used as the headquarters and residences of their leaders in Taiz and their armed fighters.

The Al Saleh Prison is a complex made up of a number of prisons. Based on special sources and information that SAM has gotten from people who know about the prison, and those that have gone to it one work visits, the prison is made up of five main parts, which are: the Military Prison, supervised by Abd al-Latif al-Mahdi, nicknamed “Abu Nasr al-Sha`th,” the commander of the Fourth Military Zone appointed by the Houthis, from Sa`da governorate, and his deputy is Ahmad Abdullah al-Sharafi appointed commander of Taiz axis by the Houthis, and the Political Security Prison supervised by a person who is nicknamed as “Abu Yahya” from Dhamar governorate, “SAM” has could not identify his real name, and the National Security Prison<sup>(2)</sup>, the Preventive Prison and the Security Prison.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Taiz Governorate Information Center <http://www.taizgov.com/new/2014-04-21-06-08-24/2014-04-22-08-50-40.html>

(2) Supervised by Abdullah Al-Hamel, from Hajjah governorate, and his deputy Abu Harb

(3) SAM is finding out the tasks of these two sections, and who supervise them.



SAM has also gotten the internal labels that are used by the Houthis for the parts of the prison, and this information is based on the testimony by the victims. These names include the “ISIS members” prison, the “reception” prison, the “criminal cases” prison,<sup>(4)</sup> the “mujahideen” prison, which is used for Houthi fighters who commit violations, the “sheikhs” prison, which is used for mentally handicapped individuals, the “Abu Harb” prison, and the “Aden” prison, which was used for detainees from the southern governorates.

Regarding the number of detainees in the “Al Saleh Prison”, a former detainee named M.Sh.Y. says that, during the period that he was detained in the prison, which was from May 2016 and until January 2017, there were more than 500 detainees languishing in the prison. “In a section of the prison that was said to be for ‘ISIS members’, there were more than 90 detainees. In the reception section, there were around 150 detainees, while there were also 150 detainees in the National Security Bureau section. There were also tens of detainees distributed to the other sections of the prison.”

(4) These three prisons were supervised by the highest-ranking security officer for the Houthis in Taiz, Abdulmalik Yahya Ali Al Shehari, who was known as Abu Shehab, before he was killed in an airstrike by the Arab Coalition. SAM has not been able to uncover the identity of the new supervisor after the killing of Al Shehari.





## Second: The Al Saleh Detention Center and Its Importance for the Houthis

The prison is located at the center of a number of areas and governorates. Because of its geographic location, it is one of the biggest private prisons that are controlled by the Houthis in Yemen. It is where most of the detainees, abductees, opposition figures, activists, opponents, and women who the Houthis kidnapped from the Taiz governorate are being kept, in addition to their prisoners of war. There have also been dozens of civilian detainees kept there, war prisoners from the Aden, Abyan, and Lahj governorates when the Houthis and Saleh's forces took control of these governorates in 2015. It is used for this purpose because it is close to these governorates, and the prison has a central location, being close to Taiz, Ibb, Hudaydah, Lahj, Aden, and Abyan.

Y.H.D., a member of the negotiation committee on behalf of the government, talked to SAM about the detainees and prisoners in Taiz. He said that the Al Saleh Prison was being used for a number of purposes, including being a precautionary detention center, a remand prison, and a central prison. There was a section of it belonging to the Houthi militias, while another was controlled by the National Security Bureau. He added that the number of detainees in the prison is in the hundreds, with some of them being detained for days while others were detained for years.

## Third: Those Responsible for the Prison

SAM has gotten dozens of names, teknonyms, and titles for the supervisors of the Al Saleh Prison and those responsible for the practices that are used in it. The organization has uncovered a number of individuals who are responsible for the prison because of their positions, and they have either ordered, facilitated, or been complicit in the crimes and violations that are committed inside the prison. There are many who are directly responsible for the crimes of torture who have hidden their identities through the use of teknonyms and titles out of fear of being held accountable or revenge. SAM has worked hard and has been able to discover the identities of some of them, but it has failed to find out the identities of some. There are also a number of individuals who are accused of being responsible for these practices whose identities have not been discovered because there are many of them and because they have numerous responsibilities in the Al Saleh Prison or other prisons.

Among those who participated in the abduction and harsh treatment of the prisoners is Ameen Abduljalil Abdulqadir Al Ramimah, Mustafa Muhammad Abdulaziz Al Ramimah, Muhammad Muhammad Abduljail Sultan Al Ramimah, Haytham Ali Al Ameen, Waseem Abdulhameed Muhammad Abbas, and Sameer Ahmad Al Ameen. They are all from the district of Mashra'ah wa Hadnan in Taiz.

Among the prominent social figures in Taiz who are in the ranks of the Houthis and who have contributed, been involved in, or participated in the detention of a number of civilians by

the Houthis are: Najeeb Qayed Al Najdain, the Deputy Governor of the Taiz governorate who was appointed by the Houthis, his brother, Fahmi Al Najdain, Sheikh Mansour Ahmad Saddam, a member of the Shura Council who was appointed by the Houthis, Sheikh Dammaj Al Bahr, the manager of the Mawiyah district who was appointed by the Houthis, Sheikh Ali Al Qirshi, Sheikh Abdulwali Al Jabiri, Akram Abdulmughni Al Junaid, and others whose identities have not been uncovered, and SAM will work to investigate and uncover them and release their names whenever it is able to do this.



**Abdullatif Hamoud Yahya Al Mahdi**  
Supervisor of the prison because  
he is the commander of the Fourth  
Military Region



**Abdullah Yahya Al Hakim**  
Supervisor of the prison during the period  
that he was the commander of the Fourth  
Military Region



**Mansour Al Lakoumi**  
The Houthi general supervisor in Taiz



**Abdulmalik Yahya Ali Al Shehari**  
Abu Shihab

### Abdullatif Hamoud Yahya Al Mahdi

He is known as Abu Nasr Al Sha'th, and he is the Houthi-appointed Commander of the Fourth Military Region. He is the person most responsible because of his position, because Taiz is under the military operations of the military region that is commanded by Al Mahdi, and he is the officer and direct supervisor for the military prisoner's section of the Al Saleh Prison. Al Mahdi is from the Saadah governorate, and he took part, alongside the Houthis, in fighting against government forces since the Six Saadah Wars. His name was also included in the list of the most dangerous Houthi members who are wanted by the countries of the Arab Coalition. Al Mahdi was appointed to this position in April 2017, replacing Abdullah Yahya Abu Al Hakim, who is known as Abu Ali Al Hakim, who had been the commander of this region since December 2015.

### Abdullah Yahya Abu Al Hakim

He is known as Abu Ali Al Hakim, and he is from the area of Dhahyan in the Saadah governorate. His name was included on the list of individuals included in the sanctions of the UN Security Council for obstructing the peace settlement in Yemen. These two individuals are the most prominent Houthi figures who are responsible for the violations that are occurring in the Al Saleh Prison, with each one being responsible for the period that they were in the position of Commander of the Fourth Military Region appointed by the Houthis.

### Mansour Ali Al Lakoumi

He is the general Houthi supervisor for the Taiz governorate and has been since 2014. He was appointed, by the Houthis, as the First Deputy for the Taiz governorate, and he is directly responsible for the Al Saleh Prison and all of the crimes that are committed in it. He is responsible for the appointment of the supervisors of the sections of the prison, as well as the investigators. He used to work as a teacher in his village, Bait Al Lakoumi, in Maswar Amran, before he was appointed, by the Houthis, as their supervisor of the Taiz governorate.

### Abdulmalik Yahya Ali Al Shehari

He is known as Abu Shihab, and he is the Houthi security supervisor in the Taiz governorate. He was appointed, by the Houthis, as the deputy chief of police for the governorate, and he is the one responsible for the detentions because of his position. He is directly responsible for the abductions and enforced disappearance. According to testimony that SAM has gotten, Abu Shihab was responsible for the crimes of kidnapping that were conducted in the areas under the control of the Houthis in Taiz. He is from the Majzar district of the Saadah governorate. SABA News Agency, the one that is under the control of the Houthis, announced that he had been killed in March 2017 by an airstrike that was conducted by the air force of the Arab Coalition, and SAM is searching to find out who the Houthi security supervisor is after the killing of Al Shehari.

### Ahmad Abdullah Al Sharafi

He is the commander of the Taiz Axis and was appointed by the Houthis. He is directly responsible due to his position in overseeing the military prisoner's section, or the war prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison, and the brutal violations and harsh treatment that they are subject to. He is the deputy of Abdullatif Al Mahdi, the Commander of the Fourth Military Region, in overseeing the military prisoner's section of the Al Saleh Prison. Al Sharafi is from the Dhamar governorate, and SAM is searching for further information about him.

### "Al Hamil"

SAM has not been able to find out his name or any information about him, but he is one of the most dangerous Houthi supervisors in the Al Saleh Prison. He is directly responsible for the National Security Bureau section of the prison, and he supervises the torture and mistreatment there. He has personally tortured a number of the prisoners in this part of the prison according to testimony that was gotten by SAM. He is from the Hajjah governorate, and he is also close to the family of Ibrahim Aamer, who was appointed by the Houthis as the Assistant Deputy of the Taiz governorate. SAM is continuing to try to find and investigate this individual to find his real identity.

الله أكبر  
الموت لأمريكا  
الموت لإسرائيل  
اللعنة على اليهود  
النصر للإسلام

الله أكبر  
الموت لأمريكا  
الموت لإسرائيل  
اللعنة على اليهود  
النصر للإسلام

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الموت لإسرائيل  
اللعنة على اليهود  
النصر للإسلام



**Ameen Humaidan**

Deputy Governor of Taiz  
Assistant Governor for Affairs of  
the Coastal Districts



**(Abdulqadir Al Murtadha (Abu Hilal**  
The head of the Houthi Prisoners  
Committee

### “Abu Yahya”

SAM has not been able to find his name or any information about him, and he is the person directly responsible for the detainees in the Political Security Organization section of the Al Saleh Prison. He is from the Dhamar governorate, and SAM is working to find more information about him.

### Ibrahim Aamer

He is the cultural officer for the Houthis in Taiz, and he was also appointed as the Assistant Deputy Governor of Taiz by the Houthis. The Houthi militias sent him as the representative for it in Taiz since 2013, and he is considered one of the Houthi leaders who have power in the governorate. He is responsible for a number of crimes, including abduction and torture of detainees in the Al Saleh Prison, because of his power and influence as a deputy in the governorate. He was seen going to the prison to drop of prisoners, release others, or to negotiate.

### Ameen Humaidan

He is the Deputy Governor for Coastal District Affairs, and he was appointed by the Houthis. According to the information that SAM has, he is responsible for a number of incidents of civilians being abducted and forcibly disappeared in the districts of the west coast, and these individuals were taken to the Al Saleh Prison. Humaidan is from the Hajjah governorate, and he was in the Hays district, in Hudaydah, before being appointed to Taiz. SAM is still looking for more information on Humaidan and his responsibility for violations in the Al Saleh Prison.

### Abdulqadir Al Murtadha

He is known as Abu Hilal, and he is the head of the National Committee for Prisoner's Affairs, which was formed by the Houthis in Sana'a. According to what it posts on its page on social media sites, the Committee is responsible for looking into, following up, verifying, documenting, and negotiating for anything relating to prisoners and missing persons from the army and the popular committees. According to mediators who were met by SAM who worked in the committees to find prisoners, the head of the committee is responsible for negotiating the



**Adel Ismael Al Mushiki**



**Ameen Al Bahr**

Former security director and  
current governor appointed  
by the Houthis

exchange of civilian detainees in the Al Saleh Prison for Houthi war prisoners. SAM has noticed that this gain, which is achieved by the Committee, has increased the appetite of Houthi leaders in Taiz to arrest more civilians so that they can be used as hostages in negotiations with government forces and then exchange for detained Houthi fighters.

#### Adel Ismael Al Mushiki

He is known as Abu Abdulrahman Al Mushiki, and he is the head of the Houthi Prisoner Committee in the Dhamar governorate. He is one of the officers who have incited crimes of civilian abductions in Taiz, and these abductees are then taken to the Al Saleh Prison. SAM has documented the transportation of many civilian prisoners from the Al Saleh Prison to different prisons in the Dhamar governorate, including the Community College Prison. In Dhamar, Adel Al Mushiki is then responsible for negotiating with the prisoners and their families, along with government forces, to secure their release in exchange for the release of Houthi fighters who have been detained. These steps have encouraged the Houthis in Taiz to carry out more abductions of civilians.

#### Ameen Al Bahr

He was appointed by the Houthi Revolutionary Committee in April 2015 as the security manager for the Taiz governorate, and he continued in this post until the end of that year. He is responsible for the crimes and violations that were committed during the period that he was in the position of the security director, after he was appointed by the authority of the de facto authorities and as a representative for them.



**Mansour Al Mayasi**  
Former head of Taiz police,  
appointed by the Houthis



**Abdulkhaleq Al Janadi**  
Current head of Taiz police,  
appointed by the Houthis



**Abdoh Al Janadi**  
Former governor of Taiz,  
appointed by the Houthis

### Mansour Al Mayasi

He was appointed by the Houthi Revolutionary Committee in January 2016 as the security manager for the Taiz governorate to replace Ameen Al Bahr, and he continued in this post until October 2018. He is responsible for the crimes and violations that were committed during the period that he was in the position of the security director, after he was appointed by the authority of the de facto authorities and as a representative for them

He was appointed by the Houthi Revolutionary Committee in October 2018 as the security manager for the Taiz governorate to replace Mansour Al Mayasi, and he is still in this post. He is responsible for the crimes and violations that were committed during the period that he was in the position of the security director, after he was appointed by the authority of the de facto authorities and as a representative for them.

### Abdoh Muhammad Al Janadi

The Houthis appointed him, in November 2015, as the governor of Taiz, and he bears the responsibility for the crimes and violations that were conducted during the period that he was in this post after his appointment by the de facto authorities and as their representative.

Based on a number of statements that were received by SAM, Al Janadi incited the Houthis to arrest a number of civilians, despite the fact that his authority is limited by the powers of the Houthi supervisors. He still contributed to committing a number of crimes of abduction, and he neglected his roles as the de facto authority towards the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison. He did not stop the torture and harsh treatment that the prisoners were subject to.

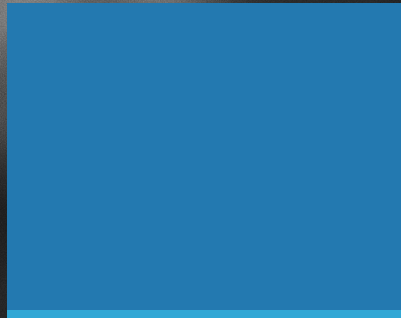
### Ameen Ali Abdullah Al Bahr

He was appointed by the Houthis in October 2018 as the governor of Taiz, replacing Abdoh Al Janadi, and he bears the responsibility for the crimes and violations that were conducted during the period that he was in this post after his appointment by the de facto authorities and as their representative.

Based on a number of statements that were received by SAM, Al Bahr incited the Houthis to arrest a number of civilians, despite the fact that his authority is limited by the powers of the Houthi supervisors. He still contributed to committing a number of crimes of abduction, and he neglected his roles as the de facto authority towards the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison. He did not stop the torture and harsh treatment that the prisoners were subject to.



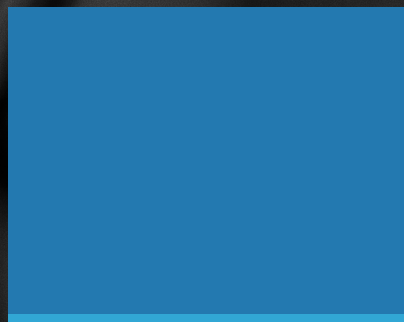
Sheikh Ali Al Qirshi



**Abdulwali Al Jaber**  
Member of Parliament



**Fahmi Al Najdain**  
Brother of Najeeb Al Najdain The  
deputy governor of Taiz appointed  
by the Houthis



**Sheikh Damaj Al Bahr**  
Manager of the Mawiyah district,  
appointed by the Houthis

# Hiding Behind Teknonyms and Aliases

SAM has gotten the names and aliases of a number of the investigators who carried out the torture and harsh treatment of prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison, as well as a number of individuals who contributed or participated in the harsh treatment of the prisoners and individuals who have tried to cover up these crimes or participated in the abductions. Despite the fact that we have not been able to get the names of many of these individuals, the organization will mention some of them in its contributions, and this will enable the victims to get to know them. The organization will also continue working on trying to find the names and identify everyone who participated in the crimes against the prisoners. These people who will be mentioned make up a small percentage of all of those who participated, contributed, or were involved in the torture, mistreatment, abduction, or inciting abduction and enforced disappearance.

Abu Hamzah, Abu Nasr, and Abu Abdulwahid are investigators who have used torture against the prisoners in the section of the prison that is known as the "ISIS members" prison. According to the prisoners, it seems that these individuals are members of Saleh's Republican Guards, and they would always curse the February

11th Revolution and the young prisoners who participated in that revolution. In addition to them, there are investigators named Abu Al Hassan Al Wa'eli, Abu Maher, Abu Aboud, Abu Hussein, Abu Turab, Abu Al Laith, Abu Haidar, and Abu Asad, and they participated in the interrogations and the mistreatment of the prisoners in the reception section and the security and military section of the prison. Most of these individuals are from the Hajjah governorate, and SAM has gotten the aliases of some of the individuals who work in the prison, or the prison guards, and they include Abu Malek, Abu Sadiq, Abu Qayed, Abu Madyan, and Abu Saad. Most of them are from the area of Al Hashmah in the northern countryside of Taiz.

SAM has also gotten the aliases of the commander of the security checkpoint that is near the factories of the Hayel Saeed Anam Companies, and he is called Abu Waseem Al Ansi. He is the one who detained a number of civilians in that area and took them to the Al Saleh Prison. Among the individuals who are responsible for the harsh treatment of the prisoners is the secretariat officer in the prison, and he is called Dirham and nicknamed Abu Mujahid, as well as the qat dealer in the prison, who is named Abu Mahfoudh.



## Fourth: The Houthi General Amnesty Committee in the Al Saleh Prison...Condemns the Houthis

Despite the fact that the Supreme Political Council of the Houthis issuing Decree No. 15 of 2016 and Decree No. 132 of 2017, which order the release of individuals who are imprisoned for political purposes.

The Houthis have formed a sub-committee to implement the general amnesty decision in the private prisons in the areas that they control in Taiz. This committee is made up of a number of individuals affiliated with the Houthis, and they are: Abdoh Al Janadi, the governor who was appointed by the Houthis as the head of the committee, and Mansour Al Lakoumi, the Houthi general supervisor of the Taiz governorate since 2014, who was appointed by the Houthis as

the First Deputy Governor in the governorate, Muhammad Mansour Al Shawafi, a Deputy in the governorate, Muhammad Abdullah Othman,<sup>(1)</sup> the Deputy Governor for Financial Resource Development as the head of the complaint committee, Yahya Al Junaid, Mansour Ahmad Saddam, Qanaf Affan Al Sufi, Dirham bin Yahya Abu Farea, and Issam Abdullah Ghaleb as members.

Despite the two decisions mentioned above, and in addition to their agreement to the understandings in Sweden under the sponsorship of the United Nations, which state the release of all detainees in the prisons of all of the parties to the conflict, the number of

(1) Zaidi Islamic Council. The Supreme Political Council approves the branch committees to implement the general amnesty decision in the different governorates <https://rb.gy/xu8vzd>

individuals released from the prisons of the Houthi militias is still very small compared to the number of detainees in these prisons. These prisons are regularly holding more than their capacity, and the detainees are being crammed into it in violation of the prison regulations and principles of human rights.

SAM has followed up with the impact of the amnesty decision that was made by the Houthis based on the testimony of detainees in the Al Saleh Prison. A week after the decision for a general amnesty was made by the Houthi leader, SAM documented a news report from the Al Manar television channel, which belongs to the Lebanese Hezbollah,<sup>(2)</sup> stating that more than 60 individuals who had been deluded into supporting the “aggression” had been released from prison.<sup>(3)</sup> The report said that these individuals had been captured while on their way to the frontlines to fight, according to the channel, but the SAM team got testimony from one of the detainees<sup>(4)</sup> in which he said that, out of the individuals who were mentioned in this report, half of them are mentally disabled, while the other half are individuals who were detained for civil cases. He described to SAM the effect that this decision, which was made by the Houthis, had on the detainees in the Al Saleh Prison, saying: “The first week of the holy month of Ramadan went by while was in the Al Saleh Prison, but we heard that the Houthi leader had announced a general amnesty for all detainees and prisoners. We were happy to hear this news, and we waited until the date. I had hoped that I would be on the list of people released through this amnesty because I am

not accused of anything. That night, the door to the prison was opened, and one of the jailers came in. He called out the names of some of the detainees, and he said that those that hear their names will be released, and those that had not heard their names will remain in the prison. I told him that they had taken me from a street, from a checkpoint, and that I was not a prisoner of war, but he did not care about what I was saying. This was their way of psychologically torturing people. They would promise to release us, and then they would not. They announce amnesties, but do not carry them out, and they announce mass releases then forget about them. When the date came for the implementation of the general amnesty, 65 detainees were released, and half of them were insane or had psychological problems. The other half were people with civil cases. From our section, only four people were released. It was strange when we heard, that night on their radio station, a report that said that the 65 who had been released were “mercenaries and people who had been deluded by the enemy”<sup>(5)</sup>, and that they had been released after returning to the fold. The reality is that the people who were released had mental problems or were being detained for civil issues, or people who were taken from the street.”

(2) Al Manar: The release of more than 60 detainees who had been deluded in Taiz <http://www.manartv.com.lb/392192>

(3) Referring to the countries of the Arab Coalition

(4) The detainee, Mushtaq Al Faqih, was released on February 5, 2017

(5) This is what the Houthis call the forces that are fighting against them who are with the government

### The Statement of MP Ahmad Saif Hashid

SAM looked into the statement that was published by a member of parliament, Ahmad Saif Hashid, on the Yemenat News Site that he owns.<sup>(1)</sup> Hashid is close to the Houthis, and he is a member of the sub-committee for the Lahj governorate to implement the general amnesty for the detainees that was issued by the Head of the Political Council of the Houthi militias. This decision was published by the Saba News that is under the control of the Houthis.<sup>(2)</sup> Hashid wrote about the results of his visit to the Al Saleh Prison, saying: "In Taiz, in the Al Saleh City, a dream deferred, some of the apartments are being used as detention centers for detainees and people who are not being charged with anything. When we reached Al Saleh City, we were received by the commanders there, and most of them are from a single governorate, and they might even all be related. I could not find a single official from Taiz in the command staff that received us, and we talked to them about implementing the general amnesty decision that we had come down to carry. I felt like Hajjah<sup>(3)</sup> was welcoming us in Taiz, and, out of curiosity, I kept looking for Taiz in Taiz to try to understand what this regionalism was that was in the governorate."

Hashid describes the difficult conditions that the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison were living in, and the violations that were being conducted against them, by saying: "In the Al Saleh City, we asked for Al Lakoumi, the Taiz supervisor<sup>(4)</sup>, to give us the files of the detainees that he had from the Lahj governorate so that we

could implement the general amnesty law. He cooperated with us, giving us five files for five detainees who were suspected of crimes. Some of them had been in the prison for months. The committee decided to release them from the prison, and this was done, and our conscience could rest. We found out that two of the individuals had psychological problems, and I was happy to see them released, but I also felt that the amnesty was for those who were released, and not for the de facto authorities, and I felt those that needed the amnesty the most are the jailers, not them."

Hashid tells the story of a civilian, Bassim Saif Noman Al Qubati, one of the detainees who was released. Al Qubati had psychological problems, and he was among the five detainees who were released from the prison and who was from the Lahj governorate. Hashid says: "Bassim was abducted by the de facto authorities of the Houthi militias in Taiz. His family kept looking for him for forty days, and they could not find him or find out what had happened to him. What was done to Bassim Al Qubati was that he was forcibly disappeared, which is a criminal act according to international law and rights. Bassim went out to look for medicine for his son, Bassam, who was nine years old, and who had liver problems. He walked a long way to look for the medicine, and his pockets were empty. The Houthi militias found him on the frontlines, and they detained him, claiming that he was "suspect". His son died two weeks after his father was detained, and the father remained detained until we came to him. He would have remained in the detention

(1) Yemenat: Dishonorable Tweets (101)...a Rights Journey...Twists and Points. <http://yemenat.net/2017/07/298598/>

(2) SabaNet: The decision of the head of the supreme political council regarding the general amnesty. <https://www.sabanews.net/ar/news482360.htm>

(3) Referring to the fact that most of the supervisors of the prison, and the interrogators, are from the Hajjah governorate

(4) Mansour Al Lakoumi, who was appointed by the Houthis as the supervisor for Taiz in 2014

center until Allah and his Ansar would have decided otherwise. Bassim left the prison with psychological issues, and we could not tell him that his son had died because we did not want the issues that he was having to turn into full-blown shock. We only told him that his son was very sick, and we gave him money so that he could return to his home, and we left the job of telling him the distressing news to his family. Bassim is just one of thousands of cases that the media has not reached. Bassim is the one who should be deciding if he will give amnesty to his jailer, and his jailer is the one who needs his amnesty. This is what should be happening.”

Hashid has expressed the secrecy that the prison operates in, as well as the motives for the detentions that the Houthis carry out against the victims in order to justify their crimes. He says: “After many phone calls, we were allowed to meet with the detainees and prisoners, and they were allowed to fill out the forms to request the amnesty, but we were not allowed to see their files. They were also not allowed to write pledges. We understood from this that the people in charge had no intention of implementing the decisions that will be made by the committee or the general amnesty decision. We were given a “list” of the prisoners by Al Hamil, who is the National Security Bureau in the prison of the Al Saleh City, and he seemed to want us to think that the list was a sign of a job well done by them. We discovered, however,

that this list was incorrect and misleading. Najeeb Al Kumait, for example, is a detainee, and it says on the list that he had been detained since 10 November 2016, but, in reality, he had been detained on 12 May 2016. This means that there is a difference of around five months where he did not have his freedom. Some of the crimes that are written on the list next to the names might seem huge and unforgiveable, but when you go into the details, you find that they were meaningless. For example, the accusation is that the accused was monitoring military movements, sending sensitive information, and determining positions, but the list does not give any information on any actions that were based on this, and you will not find a purpose or result of this monitoring. You might find that it is just a message on a phone that clearly does not mean to inform or reach any result. I felt like the people who were submitting these reports to “Al Humail”, as well as those that use these false accusations, do not want to find the truth or know what is really happening, or even to exaggerate the accusations, but they just want to be noticed and get promotions, or maybe for another reason.”

## Fifth: The Horror of the Prison for the Detainees

In the dozens of interviews that were conducted by SAM's team in the Taiz governorate with the victims and their families, as well as the other statements that are on the conditions in the prison, the organization has concluded that the Al Saleh Prison is one of the most dangerous private prisons in Yemen. It has also concluded that horrible violations are committed in this prison against the detainees, and the horror that the detainees who are released from it have expressed is indescribable. According to the testimony, leaving this detention center makes you feel like you have a new lease on life.

**S.S.<sup>(1)</sup>**

He describes the fear that he lived in the prison, saying: "They took me into an apartment that was underground, and it was called the 'Sheikhs' Apartment'. There were 18 insane people in it, and all of them were completely naked, like the day that they were born. It was a very dirty place, and you could see the waste from the detainees, their urine and feces, all over the room. I could not sit down because every square inch was covered in waste. These mentally ill people would beat anyone who came in. I spent nine hours with them, and I do not think that I will ever forget these nine hours, even if I get Alzheimer's."

The worse thing that anyone could ever imagine, including torture and inhuman treatment against the detainees, happened in the Al Saleh Prison. The amount of horror that the detainees who are released have, just because the name of the prison is mentioned, was something that the team saw on their faces, and SAM read it in the statements that the victims wrote or recorded.

**A.M.B.**

The detainee summarized this feeling by saying: "It is a state of horror, fear, worry, and psychological unease that I get whenever the Al Saleh Prison is mentioned, and is because of the torture that I went through, all of it for no reason."

**Mustaq Al Faqih**

He described that catastrophe by saying: "When the military vehicle that had been transporting me started driving towards Al Hawban, where the Al Saleh Prison is located, I realized that a new stage of suffering had started, but I could not bring to expect what would happen to me. I was just terrified and worried about my family, my mother, who had colon problems. I was worried about them more than I was worried about myself."

(1) Many of the victims and witnesses will be referred to with letters, based on their requests for anonymity, and for their safety

# A Prison Full of Oppression

## Testimony and Stories

The general condition in the Al Saleh Prison was summarized by one of the victims with this statement:

**"Some of the detainees in the prison were sane and lost their minds, while other detainees had lost their minds before they went in and came out sane."**

SAM got 27 statements from victims and their families and 3 statements from individuals who played the role of mediators to secure the release of detainees. These statements showed that the Al Saleh Prison is a complex made up of a number of prisons, and that it is full of oppression and cloaked in secrecy by the Houthis. There were different kinds of crimes and dehumanizing practices that were used in it, including torture, harsh treatment, deprivation from food, not providing cleaning and hygiene supplies, and not providing rest or ventilation.

SAM documented horrible practices and harsh and inhumane treatment that was used against the detainees in the prison. With these practices continuing, and the high number of victims, it becomes clear that torture is the norm in this

prison. SAM has uncovered brutal means of physical and psychological torture that are used in this prison, including electrical shocks, beatings with metal poles and sticks, and the use of physical torture methods, like tying the victim to a chair and putting loads of bricks on their back, or "skewering" them by tying them to a metal pole that is held up at both ends, with their head hanging down. There are also a number of methods of torture, including injecting acid into the body, or what is called fire water, staging mock executions, and many other practices that the Houthis used against the prisoners. A number of the prisoners died, while others sustained permanent disabilities. Some of the detainees lost their memories or got mental illnesses because of the harsh treatment that they went through.



**Ameer Muhammad Ibrahim Abdullah**

He is 33 years old, and he sent SAM the story of his detention in the Al Saleh Prison, as well as the treatment that he went through. He said: "I was detained on 24 February 2016, and I was taken from near the Tawfiq Abdulraheem Petrol Station in Al Hawban, in Taiz. I was there to get my salary. Idris Al Jabiri came on a military vehicle, and there were armed men with him, and they attacked me and pointed their weapons in my face. They then took me on the vehicle to the Al Saleh Prison, where they put me in one of the apartments, beating me severely and accusing me of being a member of ISIS until I lost consciousness. Every three days, I would be called in at midnight, when my eyes would be covered, and I would be tortured and beat using electrical cables. They threatened to kill me if I did not confess to being a member of ISIS. I felt horror, fear, worry, and felt psychiatric disorders because of the physical and psychological torture that I went through. Once, Houthis armed men came into the prison where we were being kept and we were beat with metal chains. This happened for no reason!

Ameer adds: "I was subject to different kinds of torture, and we were treated in a degrading manner. They did not allow us to call our families, and no one was allowed to visit us. They would not allow us to see the sun or go out to get warm, and they did not give us clean water. The water that we got had worms in it, and the food that we got did not satiate our hunger. They put us in a prison that they called the "ISIS members prison", and we would be cursed, insulted, and humiliated by the jailers.

The detainee concludes his testimony by saying: "All of the people that they had detained, without accusation...I saw mentally ill people who were detained with us, and sick people who were in a horrible condition. One of the detainees was in his sixties, and he had mental problems. He was accused of being a member of ISIS, despite the fact that he had no idea about the war that was going on in the country. In the end, his mother died, and he tried to call his family, and the Houthis discovered this and raided the cell and beat all of us."

"After that, they took me to the Community College Prison in Dhamar, where I spent two years. The Houthis kept extorting my family and getting money from them, and the last amount that they got was 800,000, after which they released me."





“  
**Anwar told us, after he was released, that he had been injected with acid**  
”

### Anwar Al Rukn

He is a journalist and political activist, and he was traveling from Sana'a to Taiz, his hometown. He was detained by the Houthis and taken to the Al Saleh Prison.

There, he was treated harshly, and he died three days after he was released because of this treatment. SAM met with AMK, one of the relatives of the victim, who gave details about Al Rukn's detention. The witness said: "One day, in September 2017, Anwar was traveling from Sana'a to Al Rahidah, and he disappeared on the way. We spent time looking for him, and we could not find a trace for ten months. After a while, one of the people that we knew went to the Al Saleh Prison to follow up with the case of another detainee in the prison. While he was there, he saw Anwar in one of the parts of the

prison, and he looked very sickly. This man contacted us and so we went to the Al Saleh Prison and followed up with his case until the Houthis released him in very bad condition. Anwar told us, after he was released, that he had been injected with acid. Within two days, his condition got much worse, and he could not even talk or drink water. We took him to a clinic in the area, but the doctor told us that Anwar's body was not responding to the medicine. He died on Monday, July 2, 2018, or three days after he had been released from the Al Saleh Prison."



### Bassim Obadi

He is 36 years old, and he was taken from the Sofitel Intersection in the eastern part of Taiz city on Monday, July 12, 2017. He was transferred to the Al Saleh Prison, where he was subject to harsh and brutal treatment. He lost some of his memory, according to him, and he spent five months in the prison, until he was released on December 12 of that same year in a prisoner exchange deal between the Houthis and government forces. He was exchanged despite the fact that he was a civilian detainee.

The SAM team contacted him, and he talked about his suffering, saying: "I was detained by the Houthis, who accused me of being a member of ISIS and said that I had been providing intel to the Coalition Air Force. They dealt with me in a very nasty way, especially since I am from Taiz. They tortured me with electrical shocks and beat me with rifle butts. They kicked and punched me and insulted me and my family. I was very scared of them, and I felt like they could hurt me at any time. I fasted most of the days in the prison because we were never given enough food to satiate our hunger or a water to quench our thirst. I was in pain from the torture, hunger, and mental anguish, and the environment was very depressing and unhealthy. We were only given one Aspirin pill, and we were not allowed to have visitors."

Obadi continues, saying: "They put me in a cell that they called 'Aden'. One day, I was taken out of the cell and my eyes were covered. I was fasting. They took me from one room to another, until they handed me over to the interrogator. He made me sit down on the ground and asked me a number of questions, and he said that he wanted me to confess that I was a member of ISIS, which I denied. He slapped me, and started punching me in the head and face, then he repeated the question. I told him that 'Only Allah was with me.' The interrogator got more violent with me, and he started hitting me all over my body, then he brought an electrical taser and connected it to my hands and kept shocking me until I lost consciousness. I did not wake up until he shocked me again, and I begged him to have mercy on me. I felt my body shaking, and tears coming out from the pain of the torture. They then brought a camera and got a video of me, forcing me to read a confession that I had given intel to the airplanes in an incident where the Sofitel Neighborhood had been bombed, an incident that left more than 50 people dead or injured. They threatened me with torture and with their guns and put the camera in front of me and a paper with what they wanted me to read on camera. I read it on the camera so that I would not get tortured. I lost a lot of my memory because of the torture that I went through."

Bassim adds: "I have seen and heard some horrible stories from the other detainees, who were tortured, and I have also seen other detainees with marks of them being tortured. Among the stories that I still remember was the suffering of a detainee, Mr. Abdulhamid Jaafar. I used to help him because his leg was broken, and he was chained. He could only crawl to the bathroom when he wanted to go."

**They tortured me with electrical shocks and beat me with rifle butts. They kicked and punched me and insulted me and my family**



**He was able to receive visitors in Sana'a, and his brothers could meet with him and hold him. When he got to Taiz, it became difficult to visit him**



**it is very bad, and there are insects all over the place that carry infectious diseases. The rooms in the prison are not clean, and the Houthis do not allow the prisoners to clean**

### Badr Sultan Muhammad

The brother of Fahd Sultan, a journalist who is wanted by the Houthi militias, Badr is 22 years old. He was detained by the Houthis in the capital, Sana'a, on July 10, 2016. He was 18 years old.

Fahd Sultan tells SAM: "My brother, Badr, traveled to Sana'a to attend a training course that was organized by a civil society organization, and a picture was taken during the training course with a leading figure in the General People's Congress, which was allied with the Houthi militias at the time. From that picture, security officers belonging to the Houthis saw my brother and captured him, and they detained him. Since that time, they have transferred him to a number of detention centers in Sana'a, with the first being the Criminal Investigation Department Prison, and the last one being the Al Thawrah Prison. Two months ago, he was transferred to the Al Saleh Prison in Taiz. He was brutally tortured in the detention centers that he was held in, but the torture increased by a large amount in the Al Saleh Prison, which he was transferred to in November 2019. He was able to receive visitors in Sana'a, and his brothers could meet with him and hold him. When he got to Taiz, it became difficult to visit him, and impossible to meet him. Even if they could meet him, they could only see him from five meters away, and they could not hear his voice, or have him hear them. There would be a metal fence between them, and the soldiers would not allow them to talk to each other!"

### Tayseer Al Samiee

AA journalist who told SAM his memories about the Al Saleh Prison, where he was detained, said: "This prison is very bad, and most of the people who are detained in Taiz are transferred to this prison. This prison was a residential neighborhood before it was turned into a private prison by the Houthis." Al Samiee adds: "This prison does not even have the bare minimum that is required by a human. There is no bed, no blankets. Most of the detainees sleep on the tile floor, and if they do find a blanket, it is small and very dirty. The Houthis have closed the windows of the prison, and they only left a small opening. Regarding the sewage system, it is very bad, and there are insects all over the place that carry infectious diseases. The rooms in the prison are not clean, and the Houthis do not allow the prisoners to clean. They do not provide the supplies for them."



**The interrogations were usually interspersed with torture and immoral actions. I have lived with prisoners, and I have heard their suffering. Some of them were tortured and humiliated, and some of them were sexually harassed, and other very shocking things**

Al Samiee, a journalist, adds: "With regards to the food, the food that is provided to the prisoners is very little, and it is very bad. The prisoners are not allowed to be brought food from their families, and you feel hungry in the prison but do not find anything to eat. Healthcare in the prison is nonexistent. If a prisoner has any health problems, they will not find any medical treatment. There is a person there who claims to be a doctor's assistant, but he does not know anything about medicine, and if a person who is ill comes to him, he will only give them simple painkillers after a lot of suffering. They purposely degrade the prisoners and humiliate them, especially the prisoners who are from Taiz."

Al Samiee describes one of the difficult experiences that he lived through in this prison for more than five months in 2017, and what he heard from the other detainees, by saying: "The interrogations were usually interspersed with torture and immoral actions. I have lived with prisoners, and I have heard their suffering. Some of them were tortured and humiliated, and some of them were sexually harassed, and other very shocking things."

The journalist, who had been released as a part of a prisoner exchange deal with the government forces, asked for all international organizations to visit this prison, which has never been visited by an organization. He said that the absence of international organizations, especially the International Committee of the Red Cross, has contributed to increasing the suffering of the prisoners. He blamed the international organizations for their shortcomings in following up with the prisoners, and for not visiting them.



**After they received me with slaps, kicks, and punches for five minutes in the Al Saleh Prison, I was called in by a person named Dirham who was called Abu Mujahid. He called me a member of ISIS, and he took my picture and he said that he would use this picture to shame my family**



**They were using the mentally ill as one of the methods of psychological torture against us**

### Shawqi Al Khulaidi

He is 25 years old, and he talks about the stages of suffering that he went through: "The security officers of the Al Saleh Prison welcomed me with slaps, kicks, and punches, and they took me into the prison with my body all sore and bruised up from the beating. I had been detained in the Al Iyar Checkpoint in the area of Al Barh on August 22, 2016. I had intended to go to the capital, Sana'a, to continue my education in the field of engineering in a university there.<sup>(1)</sup> They took my laptop and mobile phone from me, and they transferred me at midnight. They had covered my eyes and bound my hands, and they took me to the Maqbanah Court prison. Then, they took me down and interrogated me. They would fire bullets around me, and they wanted a confession from me. I was afraid, I was terrified, and I thought that I was going to die. I did not expect that they would do this to me. During that time, they heard an airplane flying overhead, so they took me back to my cell in the court and they left me. The next day I was moved to the Al Saleh Prison."

Al Khulaidi added: "After they received me with slaps, kicks, and punches for five minutes in the Al Saleh Prison, I was called in by a person named Dirham who was called Abu Mujahid.<sup>(2)</sup> He called me a member of ISIS, and he took my picture and he said that he would use this picture to shame my family. He started physically torturing me, as he would grab my hair and smash my head on metal in the wall of the prison. Then, they took me into one of the sections until they call me in for interrogations again after midnight. As soon as I sat down, the interrogator started hitting me in my back and in my thigh, and he took his rifle off safety and put the rifle to my back, telling me to confess. I asked him confess what, and said that I was a student in Sana'a, and that I would bring them proof. He told me to confess that I am a member of ISIS, and they continued interrogating me until three in the morning. They hung me from my feet to the wall, with my head pointed down, and they beat me in my back with their rifle butts. There was, on the wall of the room, blood stains, and they told me that I could either confess or they would do to me what they had done to my friends. Those blood stains, and their threats, were a form of psychological torture. At 3 am, they heard the sound of an airplane, and this stopped the interrogation. They returned me to the prison. I slept after all of that exhaustion, and

(1) SAM does not mention the names out of concern for their safety

(2) The secretariat officer in the Al Saleh Prison



I woke up at sunrise to find that all of the prisoners around me were insane and naked. I tried to understand what was happening to me, but I could not, and this was a horrifying event for me.”

Regarding the psychological torture of being put in with insane people, the college student says: “The insane people who were detained in the Al Saleh Prison were one of the ways of psychological torture that the Houthis used in the prison against the other detainees. On the second day of the detention, they took me to one of the sections which is a large hall, and I spent a whole month there. They would call this hall the General Prison, and there were different kinds of prisoners in it. After a month, they took me to a prison that they named the “ISIS members” prison, and most of the prisoners in it were cultured people who were college graduates, including doctors, education specialists, and engineers. The Houthis would tell us, before we were transferred to this section, that we would meet Saudi and Emirati prisoners, but we did not see any of that. I was happy with the other prisoners who were in this section, and we would talk, laugh, and try to have as normal a life as possible. The Houthis did not like this, so they brought insane prisoners who had a lot of energy and would never sleep. They would keep fighting and arguing with each other the whole time. There were also prisoners who had mental issues and other illnesses, and we would see them tearing apart their clothes. They would pull us from our feet when we were asleep. We asked the prison administration to take the “crazy people” out of our cell, but they refused, and we decided to go on a hunger strike for five days, so they only took out one crazy person and left the rest of them next to us. The mentally ill people were very dirty, and there were harmful insects that were living in their bodies.”

Al Khulaidi says that, after that, he was transferred to the Community College prison in Dhamar, and this was where the pressure on him and his family to pressure the government forces to trade a Houthi war prisoner for him, and this is what happened. He adds: “I spent six months in Houthi prisons, and I saw things that I never imagined that I would see. I found things that I had never expected, and I would pray to smile or laugh, but they took even that from us. They did not allow us to have any recreational activities in the prison, other than sitting around and having lectures or Quran study sessions.”



**I was also subjected to different kinds of torture, and then I was taken to the Central Prison in the Capital Secretariat**



### Saddam Muhammad Saeed

He is from the Mashraah Wa Hadnan district, and he told the SAM team his story and the torture and mistreatment that he was subjected to in the Al Saleh City Prison. He said that he was detained at 7 pm on Sunday, November 15, 2015, from the area of Al Hawban. He was taken by Houthi fighters and Saleh's forces at the time, and they took him to the Al Saleh City prison. They took his car as well, and his car was loaded with cannisters of cooking gas for his home and 920,000 Yemeni rials. They put him in a room for five months. Saddam adds: "I was subjected to brutal torture. They carried out a number of mock trials, where my eyes would be covered, and they would fire bullets next to me and throw me on the ground while

my eyes were covered, and my hands tied. They would turn on a military vehicle and drive around with me on the ground, and the jailers would talk to each other about how I would get run over by the car. They would tell me that they will not release me or let me off easy, and this continued for five months, before I was taken to the Community College prison in Dhamar. There, I was also subjected to different kinds of torture, and then I was taken to the Central Prison in the Capital Secretariat. I was released in the middle of February 2017, without my car or the money that was taken from me being returned."

## Abdulhamid Jaafar...The Story of a Lot of Pain

Abdulhamid Jaafar is an educator and activist, and he is handcuffed in his cell with a broken leg. He was taken on the night of Wednesday, August 24, 2016, and the Houthis used force to detain him, injuring him with a bullet in his leg in the process. He was taken to the Al Saleh City Prison.

We met with his daughter, Ruba, and she is a prominent rights activist in Taiz. She told us: "My father was detained because of his revolutionary activities in support of the popular resistance and in opposition to the Houthis, as well as his media activities on social media. Since my father was detained and until today, in December 2018, neither I nor any member of my family have been able to visit my father. The conditions of his detention are very bad, and the management of the prison is dealing with my father harshly and even worse than the other prisoners. We learned from prisoners who were later released who had been in the Al

Salah prison that my father is languishing in a dark basement, and that no one goes to see him unless they want to torture a prisoner, and so they would take them to the cell that my father is languishing in, or a room next to it, because these are the darkest and most secret areas. This was a method of torture for the people that they took to these rooms. The prisoners told us that, if they were moved to a cell next to my father's cell, they would hear his screams while he was being tortured."

Mr. Abdulhamid was released on December 19, 2019, as a part of the deal for exchanging detainees between the National Army and the Houthi militias, right before the report was to be issued. SAM's researchers conducted a field visit and met with Abdulhamid Jaafar to document his kidnapping and torture, and Jaafar told his story to SAM. "While I was chewing qat in my farm, near my house in the Al Kharayeb village in the Al Janadiah in the



Al Taiziyah district, at around 4 pm on August 20, 2015, a man came (a spy from the Houthi militias). He said that he wanted to rent the chicken farm that I owned. I sat down with him, and I hosted him and brought qat and tea, and we spent around half an hour together. He said that he will call the rest of his partners so that they can visit the farm and inspect it, and I told him that there was no problem with that. After around 10 minutes after his call, two people came. One of them was an officer and the other was his soldier, and there were more than 10 men hiding behind the house. When I decided to go with them to the farm, I started walking with them, and I was taking them there. This was a big shock for me (He got quiet for a bit, and tears started to gather in his eyes, but you could see that his pride would not allow him to cry). The commander put a gun to my head, and his man put his rifle to my stomach. I asked them what they wanted from me, and they said that I was wanted in the Al Saleh City, and they asked for my phone. I gave them the phone, without resisting, and, after around two minutes, they asked for my other phone, the big phone, but I refused to give it to them because it had all of the pictures of my oldest daughter on her wedding day. I threw the phone to my wife, and, at the same time, I was hit in the head by the supervisor and shot in the left thigh. I fell to the ground, and the supervisor attacked my wife and shot in her direction, and he took the phone from her (he got quiet for a bit and closed his eyes, but this time the tears of pain and oppression were falling from his eyes and overcame his pride, and he cried)."

Abdulhamid continued talking to SAM, and he said: "I was bleeding, and I told them to give me something to tie my foot with to stop the bleed. The supervisor responded and told his men to not come near me because I was going to blow myself up, even though I was not wearing anything other than my clothes. My wife was screaming as loud as she could, and she was saying that they had killed me. My son, who is five years old, was screaming and crying, and he could not deal with the shock of what had just happened in front of him.

"My wound continued bleeding, and none of them helped

me. I took off my shirt and tore it, and I wrapped it around the wound. Three people from my village came and they tried to help me, and the Houthis arrested them with me. They took me to the rural hospital in the Mawiyah Fork, and the three others were taken to the Al Saleh City Prison. They took me to them after I was given first aid treatment, and they took me into a room with no medicine. I felt like each passing minute was longer than a whole night, and an hour felt like a year. I felt the pain from my injury, and the pain from being treated like this, and I would keep asking myself what I had ever done for them to treat me with this harshness.”

Abdulhamid stopped talking, and he said that he did not want to remember what had happened to him in prison. After a while of silence, he opened his eyes and continued to talk: “Any person that would contact me and was in an area under their control, they would arrest them. They sent more than 11 military vehicles to the street in front of my house, and they detained every person who would pass through there. At around 10 pm of that day, my wife and children were forced out of our house, and it was raided. The locks were broken and everything in the house was looted, including the gold, money, deeds, and other documents. At around 11 pm, one of my friends who were working in the soap factory in Al Janad called me to see if I was ok because he had heard that I had been injured, and everyone thought that I had died. They then arrested him, along with 15 other workers in the factory, and the number of detainees had reached 60 individuals. They said that these people were the terrorist gang operating under the command of Abdulhamid Jaafar.

“In the morning of the next day, they took me to the Al Thawrah Hospital in the city of Ibb, where I was operated on after going through intense pain all night. Five hours after leaving the operating room, they returned me to the prison, and they put me in a very small room. There was no bathroom or ventilation, and the place was full of insects and leftover food that had gone bad, and other waste. They did not allow me to get the medicine or painkillers that I needed, and I remained like this.” (He was crying badly and was obviously very upset, and he could not talk continuously. His voice was very raspy). “I remained like this for six months, and I would get tortured every day, psychologically and morally. I lost the bare minimum of my human rights. I would only get two meals a day. Lunch was a little bit of rice and four pieces of bread, and dinner was a half of a can of yogurt and three pieces of bread. I would get three quarters of a liter of water to drink, and a liter of water to wash. I was not allowed to go to the bathroom, and we had to defecate in the yogurt cans.” (At this moment, Abdulhamid started crying, and he continued to cry for half an hour. When he was able to talk again, he continued giving his statement to SAM). After the sixth month, they opened the door of the room that I was being detained in, without ventilation, and I was drowning in trash and insects. I found, in the apartment that they were detaining me in, more than 25 detainees, and they said that I was the “ISIS leader”. Some of the detainees were being severely tortured, with electricity, with the “skewer” method, and with many other methods.

I was tortured on a monthly basis. I would have nights, days, weeks, months, and years and we were dying a thousand times a day from the psychological and mental torture. They told me that a shell had struck the Al Thawrah Hospital and killed the dearest person to me, my daughter, Ruba, who works in the hospital. I would have nights and days where my heartache and physical pain would mix, as well as my mental anguish and the pain in my leg. I would not be able to sleep for days, and the only thing that remained was the pain, the oppression, and the feeling of loss.

“After around two years, the Houthis allowed us to contact our families, and they opened the window so that we could breathe. They only allowed us two calls per year, once one Eid Al Fitr and once on Eid Al Adha, and each call could be for two minutes only. After that, I was comforted to find that my daughter Ruba was okay, and that what they had told me were lied. The days, months, and years passed, until I was released thanks to Allah. After five years of separation, pain, and anguish, the day came when I could finally hold the light of my life, my daughter, Ruba, and her siblings, and all of my family.

by: Fahd

**Issa Abdoh Qassim Muhammad Al Hulaif**

He is 26 years old, and the Houthis abducted him from a security checkpoint named the Al Rubaiee checkpoint in the Al Taiziyah district to the west of the city of Taiz. He was on the road to Hudaydah, and he was kidnapped on 6 September 2016. He stayed in the Houthi militias' prisons for almost three years, until he was released in the detainee exchange deal on 19 December 2019.

He tells SAM that: "At the Al Rabiee Checkpoint, they took my phone and searched it, and they saw WhatsApp chats between me and some colleagues in university about chemistry lectures. They accused me of making explosives and bombs for ISIS, and they took me to the Al Saleh City prison. There, I was subjected to all kinds of physical and psychological torture. I was tortured with electricity, and the torture would continue for around four hours. I was tortured and interrogated on a weekly basis, and I suffered from the different kinds of torture, insults, and cursing, all for no reason at all. My only hope was to finish my college studies and to start a family, to live in peace, and I do not have anything to do with any of the parties to the conflict. I spend the most difficult time of my life moving around between the prisons of the militias.

"On 10 October 2016, they transferred me from the Dhamar City prison, I do not know what it is called. In that prison, my hands and feet would be tied, and I would be tortured while standing in extreme cold. Those were the most difficult times in my life. I wished that I had never been born, and that I had never lived. I kept saying to myself that I wish that I had died and been forgotten before all this. I continued in that prison, in Dhamar, until 2 May 2017, when they transferred me to the eastern prison in the Dhamar governorate. This prison was worse than the one before it, and there was more psychological torture than physical torture.

"I would sit by myself and ask myself if this was because I wanted to study. Is this my punishment for daring to improve my society and make Yemen proud?

"I was hungry and thirsty, and I would ask for a piece of bread and some water, and I would get beatings, slaps, and be detained in the bathroom, all for asking for my most basic right! I would get sick, and I would not even get a simple painkiller. I prayed for death so that I could rest, and I have never wish for death before. Those days, I was going through death every day, but I was still alive.

"After that, on 27 July 2019, they took me back to the Al Saleh Prison in Taiz, and they would interrogate me. I would tell them to kill me and get it over with.

"I would get two meals a day and 750 milliliters of water every 24 hours, and the bread that we would get was expired. Our lives were very rough, in every sense of the word, and I was in a very bad state of mind. I would think about committing suicide and ending all of this.

"I would ask them to give me a justification for what was happening to me, to try me in court and then even execute me. I had reached a point where I was completely filled with pain, completely filled with a feeling of oppression and pain. My body reached a point where I no longer felt all of the torture. I was in a very bad place. I was crying all of the time because of the point that I had reached, and I kept thinking about what grave sin I must have committed for all of this to happen to me. I have never harmed someone, not even a small animal!

On December 19, 2019, my life was renewed. This was the day that I was reborn, and I finally was able to go out into the open air that I had been deprived of for more than three years."

## Muhammad Al Hajj: From Strength to Disability

Muhammad Khalid Muhammad Al Hajj is 34 years old and he is from the Al Taiziyah district of the Taiz governorate. He was abducted from his place of work in Al Hawban on March 5, 2018. He told the SAM team: "I was working as a porter in one of the buildings near the ghee and soap factory in Al Hawban. I was struggling just to survive and make a living for myself, my mother, and my siblings, who are orphans. I was their only support, and I sacrificed my happiness for my mother and my young siblings. On March 5, 2018, a person named Abu Ali Al Shami came asking about me, so I answered him. I was happy because I thought that he was looking for a laborer, and that I would get work from him. Then started the humiliation and degradation that I had never experienced my whole life." He got quiet, and his voice started shaking. He continued being silent, and his eyes were closed. "He started slapping me in my face for no reason and without any justification, right after I had told him that I was the person that he was looking for. There were eight armed men with him, and they aimed their weapons at my face and then they took me to the Al Saleh City. They took me into a very small room that I could not even sleep in, and it smelled horrid. While I was there, I would think of my mother and ask myself if she was eating dinner, and who would give her medicine?"

"I did not eat until the next day. Each prisoner would get two meals a day. The first meal was during lunch time, and it was four pieces of bread and a little bit of rice and vegetables. They were cooked very badly. Dinner was a little bit of beans, also cooked very badly. It was very salty, and I think that was so that we would not eat it.

"Hours and days passed, until four days later in the detention center, and my mother did not know anything about me, and I did not know what she was doing and if she was eating or not. On the fourth day, I decided to continue my habit of fasting. I used to fast every Monday and Thursday, and I would have the water that we were given before fasting all day. I would get 750 milliliters of water. I fasted on Thursday, March 9, 2018. On that same day, in the

afternoon, they took me for interrogation. The first thing they told me was that they wanted me to confess that I was a member of ISIS. I asked them what ISIS meant, that I was just a porter, and that I did not even have a phone to look up what this name meant. They covered my eyes and bound my hands, then they hung me and started beating me. I think I was hit more than 30 times then, and blood was flowing from my nose. They continued torturing me. They tied my toes and would pull each one in a different direction, until I passed out. They would then hit me on the head with a bottle of frozen water until I woke up again. Whenever I would pass out, they would hit me on the head with the bottle again." The witness stopped talking, so we gave him an hour to rest from talking about his painful memories, then he continued with his statement. "When the time for the sunset prayer got near, I asked them for some water so I could break my fast. One of them told me: 'To break your fast! You are fasting!?! You are a dog; you are a Jew. You are a pig.' And he continued torturing me until I passed out, and he continued torturing me like this from 4 pm until 11 pm. At around 11 pm they ordered some of the other detainees to take me down to their room, and I did not wake up until the next day, finding myself with thirty detainees in an apartment. The other detainees told me where I was and what had happened, and I got to know them.

"I remained in the prison, and the Houthis would remember that I was there every Monday and Thursday, and they would call me in to interrogate and torture me. These were the days that they knew I would be fasting." The witness started crying, and he stopped talking for half an hour, and then he continued recording his bitter memories. "I became disabled, and I cannot stand anymore. I went into prison a strong man, like a lion, and now I am disabled." He was crying with bitterness, and tears were flowing down his face. He continued by saying: "What life can I have now, after becoming disabled? My mom is out, begging in the streets. She used to ask me when I would get married so she can celebrate for me, but she is still in shock from having seen the condition that I am in."

# Mushtaq Al Faqih

He is a former detainee, and he tells SAM: "The evening of April 30, 2016 was the beginning of a trip that exhausted me, exhausted my family and friends. This evening was the beginning of 282 days of pain for me and for everyone that I know." He started with this sentence when talking about the story of his detention by the Houthis, and him being detained in the Al Saleh City prison. He said to SAM: "For the first two nights, I slept in a very small room that the Houthis had put me in. It was a dark room, and it only had a small hole for ventilation. After that, they took me to the Al Saleh detention center. When the vehicle [that I was in] started driving towards Al Hawban, I realized that a new stage of pain and suffering had begun in my life, but I could not even fathom how bad it would be. I was horrified and worried for my family and my mother, who has health problems, more than I was worried for myself." Mushtaq adds: "I spent the rest of the week in the reception prison in Al Saleh. Due to the overcrowding, I would sleep at night in a hall between detainees who were mentally disabled and those that had psychological problems. After midnight on Friday the 6th, I was called in for interrogation, and they transferred me to a new prison for 'ISIS members.'"

He describes his psychological suffering by saying: "In the beginning, things were very difficult, and I could not imagine that my freedom would be taken away and I would be trapped between four walls. I was forced, and I could not do anything but be patient with the situation that I was in."

"The 'ISIS members' prison that I was put in did not have a single person who had been taken prisoner during fighting, and all of the prisoners in it were people taken off the streets and at the security checkpoints. Silly accusations or a false report would be made, and they would be detained. In the prison, I met different kinds of detainees, including preachers in masjids, teachers, soldiers, sheikhs, intellectuals, construction workers, carpenters, smiths, drivers, laborers, crazy people, and people with mental illnesses."

Mushtaq Al Faqih talks about the suffering of the prisoners that he lived through during the more than half a year he spent in the Al Saleh Prison, and the harsh treatment that they were subject to, saying: "In the prison, all you hear are the sighs of the defeated and the prayers of the oppressed. In the prison, there were stories that would make you cry, and there were stories that would make you laugh until you cried. In the cell, I got to know, when I first went in, a group of young men. One of them is from Sami' in Taiz, and he had been detained at the Al Rahidah Checkpoint in Hayfah. He was accused of coming from Mareb, and he was beat and electrocuted to confess that he was a soldier, but he denied it. Another young man was from the Al Sulw district, and he had been detained at the Sofitel Intersection because he was wearing a camo jacket. When they searched his phone, they found pictures of him with a rifle, so they beat him during the interrogation so that he would confess." Mushtaq remembers that one of the young men was from Sharaab, and he had been detained at the checkpoint at the ghee and soap factor, and when they searched an envelope that he had been given to deliver for 2,000 rials, they found 25 forms for recruitment into the resistance, so they took him to the prison in his car, an SUV, with 20 armed men with him, as if they had captured a big deal terrorist.

He added: "I also saw what Murad Al Hadhrani, a soldier who had been captured, was subject to. He had been captured in the area of Wadi Al Duhi, and he was subject to intense psychological torture. The Houthis used him as a trench sandbag, and they would fire from a heavy machine gun that was placed on his back at resistance positions. Then, they would cover his eyes and fire at him, threatening to execute him. In the prison, he was put under a lot of pressure during the interrogations, and they would hang him up from his legs and threaten to throw him off a building, all so that he could confess to being a member of ISIS." Mushtaq told SAM about an Ethiopian, 'Hajus Abraham Marouf', who was detained twice from the Mawza' district and was accused of being employed by Black Water. This man was then released two and a half months after that.



## Muqbil Al Hibshi, the Blind Sniper

Muqbil Muhammad Hasan Al Hibshi, the detainee, is a blind man who was detained at the Nuh Masjid in the area of Al Hawban, which is under the control of the Houthi militias. He was a teacher of the Holy Quran in the masjid. He told SAM: "The Houthis came to the masjid, and they asked me to teach the writings of Hussein Al Houthi, but I refused.

They ordered me to say their slogan, and I told them that I did not believe in it. They told me to make prayers for them during prayer, and I told them that I do not make prayers for anyone, so they accused me of being a member of ISIS. Because this is a criminal group that has no mercy for anyone, if

you are not with them then you are a terrorist, and they do not respect anything, not life or religion or anything. They do not make any excuses for anyone, and they do not have any mercy or pity, and will attack anyone. They took me from the masjid on Friday, July 15, 2016, after the night prayers at 8:30 pm. They came and covered my face, and they pulled me out. They asked me if I was one of Ahl Al Bayt, and I told them that I was not, so they said that I looked like a member of ISIS, and that they would take me to my 'uncle's house'<sup>(1)</sup>. I told them that my uncle's house is in the village, so they took me to the Al Saleh Prison in Al Hawban, and they told me that I was a guest there because I was not with the Sayyid [Abdulmalik Al Houthi]. I was detained for three months, then they took me to the 30th Military Base, or the Al Thulaya Prison in the Aden Fork. I was tortured inside the Al Saleh Prison. They would spray me with freezing cold water at 2 am, and they would not let me sleep. They beat me with a stick, and sometimes they would use electricity to torture me. They would fire guns at me while my face was covered, and they would use the rifle butts to hit my joints, in my leg, chest, and face, until blood was running down my face.

"In the detention center, they take your phone, and they do not allow you to communicate with your family. Prayer was rare, and you would be given food on some days. They threw the food in your face, and the prison included people from a number of districts. People would have lost their minds by the time they left. The prisoners would get beat, insulted, and humiliated. In the prison, you are not allowed air and water, and they do not allow you to go out to defecate or urinate. They do not allow you to get any medicine. I got dengue fever. During the nights that were cold, they do not give you any blankets. They would take my clothes to search them for weapons, and they accused me of being a sniper, even though I am blind. Everyone in the prison was accused of something. When they took me out, they took me to Mawza' and threw me there.

(1) Uncle's home, meaning prison

## Mundhir Al Mahya

The Houthis detained him in August 2016 in a security checkpoint in Al Hawban, and they took him to the Al Saleh Prison. There, his psychological and physical suffering started, as did the suffering of his family as well. The Houthis informed his family that he had died, and it was shocking news for them. When the Houthis allowed Mundhir to call his family, his family was terrified because they were convinced that he had died.

Mundhir says: “The Houthis took me to the Al Saleh Prison, and they covered my eyes. They cuffed my hands to my feet, then they took me into a room for interrogation. They tied me by my feet to the ceiling, with my head pointing down, and they started interrogating me. They were punching me in my stomach and hitting me all over my body, using electricity cables and sticks, until blood was pouring down my head and all over my body. The interrogator would choke me by my neck until my neck became swollen, and I could not even drink water. The beatings continued from 11 pm until 4 am, then they did the same thing on the second day and the third day of my detention.”

Mundhir adds: “After the physical torture, which continued for three days, the psychological torture started. The soldiers in the prison would take me outside the prison, and the interrogator would order them to execute me and throw my body far away from the prison. I heard them getting their weapons ready to fire, and they would put their guns on my neck, and I would be in a state of panic. Then, they would take me on a military vehicle to a faraway area, while my eyes were covered. When I asked them where they were taking me, they would order me to be quiet. The questions that they asked in the interrogations, and the things that they asked of me, were all impossible, and they just wanted an excuse to torture me. They would ask me to call someone who had died, for example, or to give them the phone numbers of all of the members of the resistance in my area, for example. Because they did not allow me to call my family, they had already called them and told them that I had died in prison, and this was a big shock to them. Then, the Houthis moved me to the Community College prison in Dhamar, where I was allowed to talk to my family. When my brother talked to me, I heard him scream in terror, and he said that it was impossible that I was still alive. I asked him why, and he said that they had been informed that I had died. He gave the phone to my mother, and I talked to her while trying not to cry. She was crying out of happiness because I was still alive.”

**The questions of the investigation and the requests addressed to me were incomplete, so that they could find justifications for torturing me, so they asked me to call someone who had died.**



# PART TWO

## The Forms of Torture and the Motives for Detention

SAM uncovered a number of motives for the detention and forced disappearance that were carried out by the Houthis. These motives included detention and kidnapping for the purpose of recruitment, the use of the 'hostage' system to extort money or exchange the detainees for Houthi fighters who have been captured by the government, in addition to the main functions, like detaining political opponents, journalists, intellectuals, prominent figures, educators, and anyone that the Houthi militias believe is an enemy. The second part focuses on additional forms of torture from the first part, as well as the purposes of the detention.

# Additional forms of continuous torture

## Torture by Starvation

Even though the administration of the Al Saleh Prison did not care about the prisoners and did not provide them with food that was enough for them or health, it would not allow them to get food from outside of the prison. The administration did not allow the families of the detainees to bring them food to the prison. SAM documented a number of statements in which the witnesses talked about the prisoners being deprived of food for consecutive days as a punishment, and the meals that they are given are only given to them to keep them alive, nothing more. The food that they are given is not enough, and it is not healthy, it is just one kind of food that is given to the prisoners the whole time that they are in prison.

### Hamoud Sadaqah

He is one of the victims who met with the SAM team, and he said: "The Houthi armed men took me from the Al Waziyah district to the city of Mocha, and they put me in a basement for twenty-five days with my eyes covered and hands bound. I was beaten and threatened, and, after that, they took me to the Al Saleh Prison. I stayed there for five days, and I was beaten and threatened. The food that was given to us was bad, and the water was not suitable for drinking."

### Sh.Kh.

He was detained for five months in 2016. He sent SAM his statement, in which he tells of numerous stages of physical and psychological torture. He also talks about what he remembers about being tortured with starvation, saying: "They used to give us, every day, two bottles of water that held just a liter and a half of water for the whole day. We would drink from this water, use it for cleaning, and use it when we went to the bathroom. With regards to nutrition, it was not enough, and it was not healthy. The person in charge of the food would come and throw us the rice, potatoes, and bread. The quickest prisoners are the ones that get to eat, and those that do not make it in time stay hungry. They would only give us six loaves of bread per day, distributed over the three meals."

### Nashwan Muqbil Saif

He was detained in the Al Saleh Prison for a year and six months, and he told the SAM team in Taiz, after he was released: "During the period that I was in the prison, the Houthis put me in a dark room, and they would not give me anything to eat except for two pieces of bread and a cup of tea in the morning and in the evening. In many cases, the bread was dirty, visibly so. At noon, they would give me some rice with vegetables, and the room was very dirty and not suitable to be a prison. There was a straw mat on the floor to sleep on, without any cover, and the insects lived in the ground and in the room, especially lice."

"I wore the clothes that I was taken in throughout the year and a half that I was detained, and they would not give me other clothes. My family did not know where I was being held, and I was cut off from the rest of the world. I was not allowed to see the sun at all, or even leave the cell, despite me constantly asking and begging to do so. Because of the dirty food, I got liver poisoning and swelling in my testicles." The SAM team saw the signs of the body of the victim wasting, in addition to the signs of the torture that he was subjected to.

# Torture by Deprivation of Clean Air

The basic principles for the treatment of prisoners that was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1990 stated that prisoners be treated with respect for human dignity and their value as human beings, as well as the importance of prisoners keeping their human rights and basic freedoms that are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as medical care.

All of these things were not provided to the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison by the Houthi militias, and SAM has concluded that the prisoners were subjected to extreme deprivation of ventilation and sunlight, as well as medical care, comfort, and sleep. The victims also talked about the spread of harmful insects because of the lack of concern for cleanliness and because cleaning supplies were not provided, in addition to windows and doors being closed and the prisoners not being allowed any sunlight. There were dozens of prisoners who were mentally disabled who were not provided with any care, and they were distributed to the different parts of the prison.

## Sh.Y.B.

He is a student in a medical engineering section at university, and he never expected that he would be detained and kept with prisoners who were insane, or that he would be tortured. He told SAM: "They put me in the general ward of the prison, in the Al Saleh City, after physical torturing me during the first night of my detention. They took me into that part of the prison, and I fell asleep from the exhaustion. When I woke up in the morning, I found myself surrounded by crazy people who were naked and had no clothes on. This horrified me. When they moved me to the section of the prison for 'ISIS members', they brought in some crazy people whose bodies were dirty and they had insects and diseases. They had a lot of energy, and they would not sleep. They would yell very loudly all the time. In addition to that, there were also prisoners who had psychological problems and nervous illnesses, and we would see them tearing their own clothes. The insane detainees would pull them by their feet. We asked the administration of the prison to take the insane people out, but they refused, so we went on a hunger strike for five days, and the jailers took only one of the insane detainees out, leaving the rest with us."

**A.T.Y.**

He is one of the people who went to the prison to negotiations and try to mediate for the release of detainees. SAM met him, and he said that he went into one of the apartments where the detainees were being kept, and there were 45 detainees in it. The apartment had three small rooms, and the number of detainees was much greater than its size. He saw extreme overcrowding in it because there was not enough room for the detainees.

**M.Q.**

He talked to SAM about the lack of ventilation and cleaning supplies in the Al Saleh Prison during his lengthy testimony on the suffering that he went through during his detention. He said: "There were crazy people in the prison, and they had been detained in the streets. The Houthis leveled a number of accusations against them, saying that they provided intel, were spies, were sleeper cells, or were snipers. Because of how dirty they were, and because there was nothing for cleaning, ticks<sup>(1)</sup> became widespread in the cell that we were detained in. They ate our bodies and tore them up, especially in the beginning of the period that we were detained and the period after it, when the crazy people were with us more. When we found out whey the ticks were spreading, we decided to keep them in their own room, after trying to clean it as much as possible, and things got a bit better. Because of it, some of the detainees got scabies<sup>(2)</sup>, and the disease spread throughout the bodies of many of the detainees. I could not sleep some nights because of the intense itching sensation from the ticks and mosquitos."

Regarding the overcrowding of the prison with the prisoners, the witness said: "One night, the door of the detention center was opened, and we were surprised when a large number of detainees were brought in. When one of us tried to talk to the jailers<sup>(3)</sup> about this, they nastily replied: 'Get used to it.' We were bothered because the number of detainees in the room was 30, and the water was not enough for us. The rooms were too small, and the food was not enough, and now we had 57 detainees in the same apartment. It was a real punishment, and it was done on purpose. Every square inch of the apartment had someone sleeping or sitting in it. When one of us had to go to the bathroom at night, they had to be careful when walking so that they do not step on any of the people sleeping on the floor."

(1) Ticks are small insects that live in prisons, closed rooms, and other areas that do not get any sun, and they live off of sucking the blood and cause breakouts in the skin

(2) Scabies, a skin disease that is contagious and is caused by itch mites. Its symptoms include breakouts.

(3) The prison guards

# Reasons for Arrest

## Arrest of Civilians to Trade them for Captured Fighters

During the armed conflict in Yemen, the Houthi militias have used an illegal system of hostages to trade for their fighters who had been captured by government forces, and they would use civilian detainees who had nothing to do with the fighting to trade. The SAM team has uncovered dozens of instances that show the Houthi militias pressuring the civilian detainees and their families to trade them for their fighters who had been captured by government forces.

In the Al Saleh City prison, hundreds of civilians who had been kidnapped from their homes, from the street, from security checkpoints, or from their places of work were being detained. Many of them would not be released except in trades for fighters who had been captured by government forces.

The SAM team also concluded that the Al Saleh Prison was a crossing point for a number of detainees who were moved to other prisons controlled by the Houthis in the governorates of Ibb, Dhamar, and the capital, Sana'a. After that, they would start a new trip of being extorted and pressured so that they can be traded for fighters who had been captured by government forces.

### A.J.Q.

He is 29 years old and was detained by Houthi armed men on July 27th, 2017 in the Al Sarm Checkpoint in the Al Misrakh district.<sup>(1)</sup> He was taken as he was leaving the city of Taiz for Al Hawban,<sup>(2)</sup> and he remained disappeared until the Houthis released him on June 24th, 2018. He was contacted by the SAM team in Taiz after he was released, and he talked about his bitter experience in being disappeared and the torture that he was subjected to. His father was extorted by one of the supervisors in the Al Saleh Prison named Abu Maher, as well as others. He told the team: "When I arrived to the first Houthi checkpoint in the area of Al Sarm, after leaving the city of Taiz towards Al

Hawban, Houthi armed men took my phone and ID and they took me out of the car that I was on. They kept me in a small room next to the checkpoint for three days, after which they took me to the Al Saleh Prison. There, one of the interrogators, who was named Abu Hussein, ordered that I be kept in solitary confinement for three months. They interrogated me three times during that period, and they subjected me to excessive torture. The interrogator, Abu Hussein, would hit me on my back and legs, and they would electrocute me. They accused me of being a member of ISIS, and the interrogations and torture would continue from 8 pm until 2 am."

(1) Mountainous road used by the residents of the city of Taiz to cross into other governorates after the main entrances into the city were closed by the Houthi and Saleh alliance

(2) The western part of the city of Taiz, which is under the control of the Houthis



**they would take him down to the basement with his eyes covered and hands and feet bound in metal chains.**

The detainee says that, on the days that he was interrogated and tortured, he would hear terrifying screams from the first floor from other detainees who were being tortured, and he was on the fifth floor. He later learned that this screaming was from Muammar Al Sharaabi, Abdullah Al Sharaabi, and Ahmad Al Haidari,<sup>(1)</sup> who were being tortured.

In some of the interrogation sessions, according to the detainee, they would take him down to the basement with his eyes covered and hands and feet bound in metal chains. The supervisors who were watching and interrogating him were Abu Hussein, Abu Turab, Abu Al Laith, and Abu Haidar.

The prisoner said that, during nine months of his disappearance in the Al Saleh Prison, the Houthis did not allow him to contact his family, and he did not know how they were doing, and they knew nothing about him. No one was allowed to visit him. After he was moved to the Community College prison in Dhamar, they allowed him to contact his family. To release him, they required the release of two Houthi prisoners of war who had been captured by government forces, despite the fact that he was a civilian and had been captured while traveling to the area of Al Hawban. This is, however, what happened, and he was released in exchange for two Houthi fighters who had been captured by government forces.

### **Ibrahim Fuad**

He lives in the district of Khadir, which is under the control of the Houthis, and he was detained by Houthi armed men in a security checkpoint in the Mawiyah Fork detained him on February 10, 2016. SAM met his father, and he said: "That his son was detained with his colleague, Issa Muhammad Al Salmani, and they were taken to the Al Saleh Prison, where he was detained. We did not know anything about him for six months. After that, someone who spoke with the accent of Dhamar called me and asked me to exchange my son for a Houthi fighter captured by the popular resistance forces. This person then allowed my son to talk to me, and I asked him where he was, and he said that he was in Dhamar, but did not know which prison he was being held in. When I could not mediate with the resistance forces to secure the release of a Houthi prisoner, they moved my son to the Central Prison. There, we were able to contact him, and he said that he spent two months in the Al Saleh Prison, where he was tortured. Then, they took him to the Community College prison in Dhamar to exchange him for a Houthi prisoner, then they moved him to the Central Prison in Sana'a. He was still in the central prison on the date of the interview with his father in February 2018."

(1) SAM looked for them, but we did not get any information that would help us reach them.

### Sh.Gh.

Despite the fact that he is a student, he was detained for six months without any charges, and he was not released until a Houthi prisoner of war was exchanged for him. He told SAM: "They released me from the prison January 6, 2017 in a prisoner exchange deal. They released me without the things that they had taken from me when they took me, including my laptop, phone, and personal ID> They took everything from me. They took me from Dhamar to Taiz in the car of the officer responsible for the exchange of Houthi prisoners in Dhamar, and he was called Abu Abdulrahman. I asked them where they were going to take me, and they told me that they were going to take me to the National Security Bureau prison in Sana'a. I was afraid of that, but they returned me from the Community College prison in Dhamar to the Al Saleh Prison, where I had been detained before being moved to Dhamar. One the same day, I was exchanged for a Houthi prisoner, and they took me to Hadhran, to the west of the city of Taiz, and then they took me, on foot, to Mount Han. They covered my eyes, and they dragged me along like an animal. There, I was exchanged for a Houthi prisoner. The resistance forces received me, and I returned to my family in Taiz City."

### M.N.Dh.

He was kidnapped while with his wife, when they were in his car, in the area of the Al Dhikrah Fork<sup>(2)</sup>, near the Al Saleh Prison. He was taken to the prison, where he was tortured, then he was taken to the community college prison in Dhamar. There, the negotiation process started to be exchanged for a prisoner of war, and this continued for almost a whole year.

He told SAM, after he was released: "At 10 pm on a Wednesday, in August 2016, I was with my family and my older brother in the Al Dhikrah

Fork. I was stopped by Houthi armed men, and they took me out of my car and to the Al Saleh Prison, without any charges or accusation being made against me. They took me into one of the cells, then they chained my hands and feet and covered my eyes. They then took me for questioning and asked me a number of questions about the war and the Houthi militias, as well as on the 'Aggression' and my relationship with people in the 'Resistance'. They beat me, slapping, punching, and choking me, and they also beat me with electrical wire on my head. I was bleeding from my head and different parts of my body, and they also insulted me and used racist terms.

"They called me an 'ISIS member', and they made me lose hope of ever being released. They did not allow me to contact anyone that whole time that I was detained in Al Saleh, and they did not give us anything to protect us from the cold. We slept on the tile floor. They did not allow us to have any visitors, and anyone who would try to visit us would be interrogated.

"Then, they took me to a prison that they have in Dhamar, where they interrogated and beat me, then they ordered me to call my family so that they could pressure the resistance to release a Houthi prisoner in exchange for my release. I called my family and explained this to them, and my family responded and started looking for a mediator with the resistance to exchange me for a Houthi prisoner of war. The officers of the resistance in Taiz responded and included my name in the exchange lists between the two sides, and this was done, even though I am a civilian detainee."

(2) A popular market on the road linking the Ibb and Taiz governorates, it is in the areas controlled by the Houthis

# Arresting Civilians and Torturing Them for the Purpose of Recruitment

**SAM documented the testimony of victims who were detained for the purpose of recruitment, and this type of detention focused mainly on groups that were socially and economically marginalized and children, and using torture and threats against these individuals to force them to join the Houthi forces.**

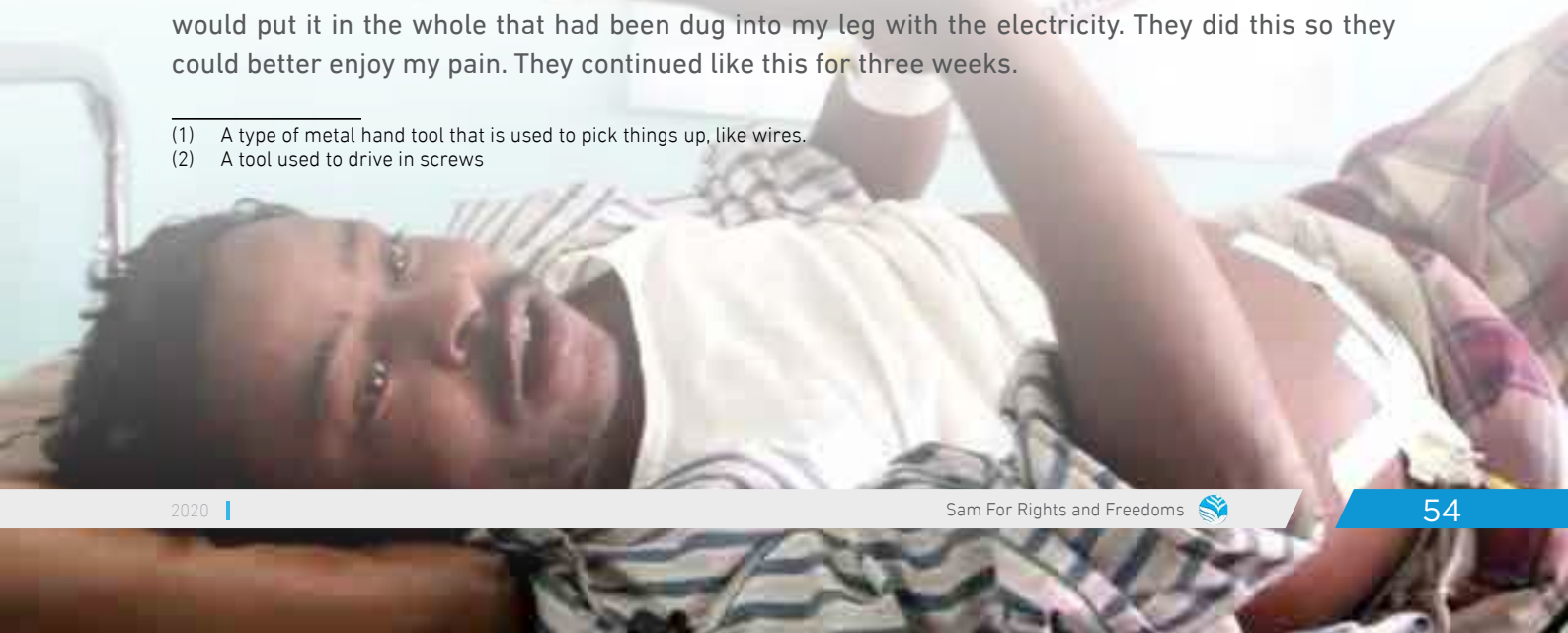
## Nashwan Muqbil Saeed Saif, one of the Muhamasheen (marginalized)

He was 35 years old when he was detained in March 2017, and he was taken from a Houthi security checkpoint in the area of Al Hawban. He was taken to the Al Saleh City Prison, and he met with the SAM team in December 2018, three months after his release. The marks of torture could still be seen on his body. He later died because of the harsh treatment that he was subjected to in the Houthi prisons. He died eight months after being released from the Al Saleh Prison.

Nashwan told us: "They kidnapped me from a security checkpoint in Al Hawban, and they took me on a military vehicle, along with three others, to the Al Saleh Prison. They put me in a room and close the door, with no food or anything to drink, and then Houthi interrogators came to me at 12 midnight. They covered my eyes, tied my hands behind my back, chained my legs with chains, and then they asked me to join them and fight. I refused, so they threatened that they would level accusations against me. I told them that I would never join them, no matter what they did, and that people should be recruited based on their beliefs, and not by force. The interrogator responded and told me: 'It is clear that you are brave, strong, and eloquent.' I told them that only Allah is strong, and they started to torture me. In that first night, they brought a pair of pliers<sup>(1)</sup> and started pulling my nails from my hands and feet in a very violent manner. Blood was coming out because the nails had been pulled out, and this caused a lot of pain for me. I could not sleep because of it. They left, and then they came back on the next day, and made the same offer. I refused, and they beat me with wooden sticks then left. On the third day, they came and brought car suspension springs, and they put it behind my knee while I was sitting, then they pushed my head and back down to my thigh and put cement blocks on my back. They ordered me to stand, but I could not, and they increased the number of blocks on my back. They would rip meat off my knee, thighs, and leg, and then they would bring a sharp and solid instrument and hit me in the head. I was electrocuted with a sharp instrument that was connected to electricity, and they would stab it into my leg. Then they would bring a screwdriver<sup>(2)</sup>, and they would put it in the whole that had been dug into my leg with the electricity. They did this so they could better enjoy my pain. They continued like this for three weeks.

(1) A type of metal hand tool that is used to pick things up, like wires.

(2) A tool used to drive in screws



"I spent a year and six months in the prison. During this period, I was subjected to brutal physical and psychological torture, in addition to the fact that the food we were getting was very bad and very little. I was in solitary confinement, and I got liver poisoning and my whole body became swollen. My testicles were swollen because of the beatings, and it was very hot, and my clothes were dirty. I could not move, and I did not get any sun. I was not taken in for medical treatment, and I was not given any medicine, despite the fact that they knew the complications caused by their torture to my body and organs."

"A year and six months after my disappearance, they took me out of the cell at 6 pm, and they covered my eyes and took me out on a military vehicle to the area of Shibam.<sup>(3)</sup> They threw me there on the side of the road, and a motorcycle driver passed by and took me to the Al Thawrah Hospital in Ibb City. There, I got an operation for my testicles, and I spent a month in the hospital until I was able to leave. A bus driver provided me with transportation to my family in Taiz, and now I am getting treatment in the Al Thawrah Hospital in Taiz."

The SAM team saw the signs of the torture on the head of the victim, his knee, his leg, his thigh, his feet, and his toes. There were holes in his head and right leg, and injuries to his knee. They also saw a disability in his right foot, and the marks from his nails being pulled out in his legs. The SAM team got a medical report issued by the Al Thawrah Hospital in Taiz stating that the patient was suffering from cirrhosis of the liver and ascites due to the liver poisoning and that he would need medical treatment and follow up.

**While this report was being prepared, SAM received the news that the victim, Nashwan Muqbil Saif, had died on April 29, 2019. The Abductees Mother's Association, through its branch in Taiz, released a statement on May 1st blaming the Houthis for his death because of the torture that he was subject to in the Al Saleh City Prison.**

#### **N.B.Z.**

He is a resident of the city of Zabid on the coast, and he used to work in a cafeteria in the middle of the city of Taiz. He was detained twice in the Al Saleh Prison, and he was forced to go to the West Coast frontlines to fight in the ranks of the Houthis.

The SAM team met with some of his relatives and work colleagues, and M.S.B. said that the victim was on work leave to visit his family in Zabid. When he returned to work in Taiz, he went through Al Hawban. When he was in the Al Khashab Security Checkpoint, which is controlled by the Houthis, the men at the checkpoint detained him and took him to the Al Saleh Prison. This was on Sunday, July 1, 2018. He spent 17 days in the prison, and the Houthis forced him to sign a pledge that he was going to return to Zabid.

He tried to go back to Taiz one more time, because that was where his job was, and, when he reached the same checkpoint where he was detained the first time, the men at the checkpoint recognized him and detained him once again on July 21, 2018, then they took him to the Al Saleh Prison, where he spent a number of days before being taken to the Criminal Investigation Department prison in the Ibb governorate. This time, the Houthis forced him to return to Zabid to fight in their ranks on the west coast.

(3) A rural area on the road linking the cities of Taiz and Ibb

# Detention Civilians for Financial Extortion

This type of detention is called the 'hostage' system, and it is criminalized by international agreements and treaties. Most of the people who are detained by the Houthis in the Al Saleh Prison are detained for the purpose of extorting their families financially, and this has become a source of wealth for the people running the prisons. They regularly abduct people from the security checkpoints. According to one of the negotiators who have interceded with the Houthis to secure the release of detainees, the Houthis use this kind of detention because they are unable to cover the costs of the prisons. Therefore, extorting the detainees for large amounts of money in exchange for their release became a profitable way of covering the expenses of the prisons and those responsible for them.

## Ibrahim Jalal Al Qubati

He was detained for almost a year. In addition to the torture and harsh treatment, he was not released until his family gave in to the Houthi demands and convinced government forces to exchange him for Houthi prisoners of war. He talked to SAM after he was released on how the Houthis extorted him and tricked his family into giving up large amounts of money for his release, and he said that he had learned about

this from his father after he was released. One of the interrogators in the Al Saleh Prison, named Abu Maher, was in contact with his father on a regular basis asking him for money for the release of his son. He tricked his father, who transferred almost one million rials over a number of payments, but they did not release him, and they transferred the prisoner to another prison in Dhamar.

## Ameer Muhammad Ibrahim

He told SAM about how the Houthis in the prison would extort his family financially, saying: "They extorted large amounts of money from my family, saying that they were following up with the prison's administration to secure my release. My family would send them money to provide me with food and water, but this money would go to the jailers and they would take what they wanted from it. They would put the rest of it in the prison's fund, and if we needed our money, they would only give it to us after many arguments, yelling, demands, and mediation.

Ameer tells the story of his release, saying that after the Houthis extorted large amounts of money from his family, they asked for 800,000 rials as the final amount. They were paid it, and they released him in exchange.

**Anees Hamoud Salam Ahmad**

He is 33 years old and resides in the Al Manakh neighborhood in Taiz. He was detained because he had his father's death certificate with him, and the Houthi armed men took him to a detention center controlled by them then to the Al Saleh Prison, when the extortion of his family started.

The SAM team met with 'Hamdi', the victim's brother, and he said: "Anees was driving his car, dropping off one of his clients to the city of Al Qaidah in Ibb. He went through the Al Waziyah road. While they were in the Al Miqsab security checkpoint that was controlled by the Houthis, they searched the car and found his father's death certificate, so they detained him and took his car. This was when the journey of suffering started. Since the date that he was detained, which was November 19, 2016, the Houthis moved him to Al Saleh Prison, and they put him in a cell in building 30. The jail supervisors started to extort us, and we paid them more than 700,000 rials. One of the Houthi supervisors, and his name is Abu Asad, took 400,000 rials from me, and he promised that he would release my brother, but then he turned his phone off an hour after getting the money. Three days later, he turned his phone on again, and we asked him why my brother had not been released, and he said that my brother's case was very big, and that the money had been distributed to the supervisors of the prison. What he meant by this was that he was trying to get more money out of us by making us think that my brother was facing huge charges, even though Anees was not charged with anything."

**Dr. S.H.N.**

He is a consultant with the Social Fund for Development, and he was on a work trip with the SFD to implement a project in the Hayfan district in July 2017. He was detained by the Houthis from the hotel that he was staying in, and he was taken to the Al Hawban police station. They started by trying to get him to pay for his release but refused over the five days that they negotiated with him. He was then transferred to the Al Saleh Prison, where they put him in an apartment on the fourth floor. The prisoner told SAM, after his release, that the building that he was detained in was full of detainees. "I noticed that from their screams and yells, and I was in a cell without blankets or any cover. The management of the prison took my phone when they searched me, and they found a bank account number in it. They started to extort me and try to get me to pay, and they asked me to transfer money from my bank account, but I refused. I denied having that money in the first place, and I told them that it was the money belonging to a relative that they had deposited in my account. The Houthis insisted that I pay them, and they continued to do this over three weeks. After mediation and a lot of follow up, they released me. I realized that they had detained me so that I would give them money, nothing more, and I found out about other detainees who had been extorted, with some of them paying more than 200,00 rials to be released."

# Recommendations

## First: For the International Community

- Pressuring the Houthi militias to release all of the detainees and forcibly disappeared individuals in the Al Saleh Prison and immediately stopping all of the harsh treatment and humiliation of the prisoners, as well as closing all of the prisons that are not under the control of the public prosecutor and the prisons, starting with the Al Saleh Prison.
- Working to ensure that investigation committees and teams of experts from the Security Council and the Human Rights Commission are able to access the prison so that they can investigate the violations that are committed there against the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison and all private prisons in the Taiz governorate.
- Working to ensure that all individuals accused of committing violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Yemen are held accountable, especially those who are accused of torture, abduction, enforced disappearance, and extralegal execution.
- Pressuring all of the parties to the conflict in Yemen to immediately release all of the detainees and uncover the fate of the forcibly disappeared.

## Second: For the Houthi Militias

- Immediately releasing all of the prisoners in the Al Saleh Prison and uncovering the fate of all of the forcibly disappeared, as well as handing over the Al Saleh City to civilian entities that will be responsible for completing its construction and handing it over to its beneficiaries
- Immediately ceasing all forms of physical and psychological torture and harsh treatment against prisoners and providing for all of these needs until they are released
- Allowing serious investigations to be conducted to uncover the individuals responsible for the abduction and torture of detainees, as well as all of the individuals responsible for managing the prison from the time that it was opened and until the present day.
- Compensating all of the detainees and forcibly disappeared and their families, especially those that died in prison, or those who died because of the torture that they were subjected to.
- Cooperating with the Panel of Experts helping the Sanctions Committee on Yemen in the Security Council that was established by Decree 21 40 (2014) and the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen who were formed by the Human Rights Council based on Decree No. 34/33 to facilitate their access to information and victims in all private prisons, and allowing the organizations, activists, and the media working on these issues to go into the prisons to investigate the violations
- Working to close the Al Saleh Prison immediately, as well as all other private prisons.





# **AL SALEH DETENTION CENTER**

Rights report documenting the treatment of arbitrary detainees and the forcibly disappeared, including brutal torture and harsh treatment, in the Al Saleh Detention Center that is controlled by the Houthi militias in the Taiz governorate

**Geneva - Jan 2020**



**SAM**  
Rights & Liberties



**In summary, one of the detainees told SAM:**

"Some of the detainees in the prison were sane and lost their minds, while other detainees had lost their minds before they went in and came out sane."

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**Jan 2020**

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