

CRIME IN THE MOSQUE

A report Investigates Al-Tawheed Mosque Crime in
Muth'ad, Al-Azariq District, Addalie Governorate,
committed on 27 June 2019







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Executive Summary

On 7th July 2019, recruits affiliated to the Security Belt, a proxy of and funded by the UAE, committed an extralegal execution of five civilians in Al-Tawheed mosque, during and after Friday prayer in Hijrat Muth'ad village, Al-Azariq District, Addalie Governorate, southern Yemen. The victims are of Hashemite origin and are members of Sunni sect, who lived in this village for long time.

SAM interviewed 11 eyewitnesses and reviewed more than 20 official documents and correspondents, including criminal evidences and forensic reports.

According to the testimonies and official documents reviewed by SAM, about 12 recruits arrived in a patrol vehicle of the Security Belt, with clear identification marks and colors belongs to the UAE-baked

Security Belt forces, in Addalie governorate, to the village during the Friday prayer. They positioned in the village and started shooting at the mosque's walls, and some neighboring houses, and some fired at air.

At prayer's end an armed man stands at the gates and stated shooting at the worshipers, killing two and injuring 5 others. Then they took 6 of the worshipers from inside the mosque and executed three of them, cold-bloodedly.

This incident is one among others of extralegal execution committed during the armed conflict in Yemen by different parties to the conflict, including Houthis militia, who committed similar crime in Al-Malagim district, Al-Baidha governorate against 4 of Aal Omer sheikhs in July 2016.

The Security Belt forces receive technical

and military support and training from the UAE, and act on behalf of the UAE.

This crime mount to a crime against humanity, noting that it has been committed within the context of the armed conflict, and the leader of the Security Belt, loyal to the UAE, bears the responsibility for such crime.

The UAE forces in Yemen shall hand over the culprits to the security and judiciary authorities of the legitimate government, to be stand trial for this crime.

The Yemeni government shall work seriously to dissolve all military or security formations that are not affiliated to the ministry of interior or defense, and shall apply laws on those who break the pertaining law, to ensure security and safety in the community.

The Yemeni government shall also ensure justice and equity for the victims of this and other crimes committed by this Force, or other forces loyal to the government in the areas under its control. Victims and their relatives shall receive justice.

SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties, is keen to document extralegal executions, arbitrary executions and summary executions, and has published a report to that effect, titled "A Brutal killer", in 2016, as the first report specialized in such type of crimes in Yemen.



Background; Extralegal Killing

Extralegal killing, is one of the gross crimes that require hard penalty, and preserving of human life is one of the major objectives of Islamic Sharia. Islam has provided for certain provisions to preserve innocent people blood, and made execution as an earthly punishment for homicide crime, however, the victim's right in the judgement day is also reserved.

Within this context, diving rules and laws of men are identical in honoring the right to life, that to be denied at very limited instances, provided that law is enforced and justice prevails.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights

provided that the right to life is a genuine human right, also the ICCPR, that Yemen has ratified, incriminated death penalty on civilians, including for serious crimes, that are related to national security committed during the war, without competent court ruling.

Article 1 of the ECOSOC 1989 Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Executions, called the state parties to ban all extralegal, arbitrary, and summary executions, and such crimes shall be penalized with an adequate penalty, also the exceptional situations shall not justify death penalty.



Report Methodology:

SAM referred to different sources to document information and data related to the incident, including eyewitnesses, relatives and also collected different documents related to the criminal evidences and autopsy reports, in addition to official correspondents in Aden. SAM interviewed 11 witnesses, and reviewed more than 20 related documents. And based the report on the Yemeni Penal Code, and international humanitarian and human rights laws.

SAM Organization is keen to document extralegal executions, arbitrary executions and summary executions, committed by the parties to the conflict in Yemen, and has published a report to that effect, titled "A Brutal killer", in 2016, as the first report specialized in such type of crimes in Yemen.

Extralegal Killing; A Horrific Figures:

During the 4 and half years of the armed conflict in Yemen, triggered by Houthis-Saleh coup and seizure of Sana'a in September 2014, SAM has documented extralegal execution of 408 people, till May 2019. Where 74 were executed in 2016, 186 in 2017, 149 in 2018, at various governorates, where Ibb, Taiz and Dhamar, Al-Baidha governorates and Sana'a city came first in the number of executed.

Majority of victims were killed by Houthis-Saleh forces, before the break up of their coalition, followed by Houthis, after 2017, where they have executed more than 207 people. Followed by the US forces, with 98 victims, then the terrorist organizations; AQAP, IS, with 45 victims, followed by the forces loyal to the UAE in the southern governorates with 40 people, and finally the government forces with 15 extralegal executions.

According to the cases documented by SAM, execution took place through different means, including by direct fire shots, house detonation, killing under torture inside informal and secret prisons, or by other some slow-killing means. the US troops committed mass execution in Yekla village, Al-Baidha governorate.

Political and religious adversaries are the major victims of the extralegal killings, especially in the capital Sana'a.

Executions also occurred on other categories, including merchants, tribal sheikhs, students, and activists, accused of being members of extremist organizations, or working with the aggression (the Arab Coalition), also on women and children, and military personnel loyal to the government military units who were prisoners of war, and other categories.



The execution of the six civilians in Hijrat Muth'ad, Al-Azariq district, in Addalie governorate, has a sectarian motivation, where the victims are of the Hashemite origin, but they are not members of Houthis militia, nor do they believe in their ideology, rather some of them joined the fighting against the militia, according to the villagers.

The crime was detested by the community and brought back the memories of similar crime, in Al-Malajim district, Al-Baidha governorate, where Houthis militia executed 4 of the sheikhs in July 2016. Also, the US commandos attack on Yekla village, Al-Baidha, where they executed 30 civilians, including 6 women, 3 children, in one of the most heinous extralegal executions in Yemen.



Where did the crime took place?

Hijrat Muth'ad, is one of Al-Azariq villages, in Addalie governorate southern Yemen, and its population is 179 people according to 2004 census. They depend on farming, livestock grazing, and hard labor.

Hijrat Muth'ad is affiliated to Bilad Al-Ahmadi, inhabited by Sufyan Al-Huseini Al-Hashemi, of Sha'fi sect, before 400 years, whose great grandfather Sufyan bin Abdullah, came from Hijaz to Aden; who is buried in Al-Houta, Lahaj.

Al-Hijra is the name of village allocated for the Sharia Ulama, to lean and teach people the Sharia, who are often of Hashemite origin, and are treated with special respect and norms that exempt them from involving or impacted by the tribal fights, and the tribe is responsible for their protection and security.



How and When the Crime Took place?

According to the testimonies and official documents reviewed by SAM, about 12 recruits of the UAE-baked Security Belt forces arrived to Hijrat Muth'ad during the Friday prayer, on the third day of Eid Al-Fitr, on 7th June 2019, and started shooting at the mosque's walls, and some neighboring houses, and some fired at air.

Following the prayer, the armed men stood at the mosque's gate and fired at the worshippers, killing 2 and injured 5 others, took 6 others and executed 3 of them, and we will detail this later in the report.



What is the Security Belt Forces?

Following Sana'a fall in the hands of Houthis militia, in September 2014, and the Arab Coalition interference to restore the legitimate government in March 2015, who forced Houthis to retreat from Aden city, and Shabwa, Abyan and parts of Lahaj governorates, the UAE formed some paramilitary and political forces anti-the legitimate government, which is not controlled by the government, including the Security Belt forces in Aden and Addalie governorates, and other forces in Hadhramout, Shabwa, and Suqutra, funded, trained and armed by the UAE forces.

These forces are functioning in proxy of the UAE, according to a report issued by the UNSC Panel of Expert, and to other reports published by SAM and a number

of news agencies. The Security Belt operations lack legitimacy, and they are similar to any other militia, considering their legal status; like Houthis, or AQAP.

This attack was handled by the police as a "homicide case", and investigated it accordingly. The police sent a memo to the Security Belt requesting subpoena of Rashid Muhammed Muhsin and others who were in the patrol vehicle.

According to articles 131 to 136 of the law on Crimes and Punishment No. 12 of 1994, forming of the Security Belt forces and other similar military units is incriminated.





Noting that this crime was committed within the context of armed conflict, it is mounting to “crime against humanity”, hence the UAE-backed Security Belt forces, bear the full responsibility.

The UAE forces in Yemen, shall hand over the suspects who are accused of committing extralegal executions in Hijrat Muth’ad, who are members of the Security Belt to the security and judicial authority to be punished for their crime, and shall also compensate the victims

and their relatives.

The Yemeni government shall work seriously to dissolve all security or military formation which are not controlled by the ministry of interior and defense, and to apply the relevant law on the abusers, to maintain security and safety of the society.

The Yemeni government shall also ensure justice to the victims of this crime and all other crimes committed by these forces in areas under their control.

Who are the Victims?

Five people were killed in this incident, two inside the mosque; Muhammed Khalid Ahmed, teacher and his brother Muhsin, livestock merchant. Muhammed is the breadwinner for the family, and their father is blind and he suffering the ordeal of losing his two sons, and his nephew.

The Security Belt soldiers executed the other three civilians outside the mosque, who are; Muhammed Muthana Obeid, the Imam, who is anti-Houthis and left his village in Mawya district when Houthis – Saleh forces controlled it before four years. He left behind 7 girls and one boy who witnessed his father execution. Then they executed Abdo Saleh Ahmed, who is a soldier and accused him of

being member of Houthis militia. The SB soldiers executed retired soldier Taha Abdullah Al-Shiba, who used to work in house construction, while trying to escape after seeing his colleagues' execution.

Five other civilians were injured in the incident, they are; Ahmed Hassan, Ahmed Muhisn, Ahmed Hadi Hassan, Abdullah Ali Khalid, and Hani Hassan Khalid, and three of the worshipers were abducted; Ahmed Muhammed Al-Daeri, Abdulwahid Muhammed Muhsin, and Ali Muhammed Ahmed, but have been released after 4 days, following tribal mediation and pressures.

Testimonies:

SAM interviewed eyewitnesses and survivors of the shooting, whose testimonies are listed below on anonymity condition, for their safety.



First Testimony:

Witness A.D. told SAM that “about 12 masked soldiers approached us on a vehicle from the Security Belt forces, while we are performing Friday prayer. They surrounded the mosque and start shooting while we are at the first kneeling of the prayer. We completed the prayer and after the prayer, the soldiers shouted: “Get out the wanted men, we tried to go out to them and one of the worshipers talked to them. We asked them who are the wanted people and what is their case? They said that they had been with Houthis during the Eid, we know nothing about this, only from one of the soldiers, we said who they are? He took out his phone and called out names that were not present during Friday in the mosque. We told them they are not here, and asked them to take us as hostages till we bring them, but they didn’t listen to us and they started firing at the people indiscriminately. We were unarmed inside the mosque. They killed one worshiper;

Muhsin Khalid Ahmed, and continued firing to kill his brother Muhammed, we requested them to allow us to rescue him but they refused and he continued to bleed till he died. Sheikh Ahmed Hadi was seriously injured. Ahmed Muhsin was injured in his abdomen, also Hani Khalid the nephew of the two killed persons, as well as Ahmed Ali, Ahmed Hassan Muhammed and Abdullah Ali Khalid. Then they took six worshipers near to the vehicle including the preacher, Muhammed Muthana, a displaced from Rabat Ammar. He was wanted by Houthis. They fired and killed the Imam, and then Abdo Saleh Ahmed. A third man, Taha Abdullah Mohammed, tried to escape when he saw that they had executed two, but they fired and killed him instantly. Then they took the remaining three; Ahmed Muhammed Ali, Ali Mohamed Ahmed, and Abdulwahid Muhammed Mohsen to the vehicle, and took them to Addalie, and handed them over to the Security Belt in Hakola area.”

Second Testimony:

The witness «AJ» told SAM: «Attackers from the Security Belt forces came to our mosque, killing worshipers and wounded and abducted others, and the killers are still at large and they've committed their crime on ethnic and political grounds under the pretext that the villagers are Hashemites, and that all Hashemites are Houthis.

The recruits, who committed the crime, are indoctrinated that that all Hashemites are Houthis, and that they must be killed, even when they kill the worshipers they have been chanting "Allah Akbar", God is Greatest."

I've nothing to do with the war, but I'm fugitive now because of my standing beside the victims.. there were 3 abductees who were released after 4 days of the incident.. the crime would have been coverup if not those abductees detained at the Security Belt premises.

The Security Belt forces, established a checkpoint 5km far from Hijrat Muth'ad, the villagers were not allowed to pass without presenting g their IDs, and many were harassed just because they are from the village.



Third Testimony:

Witness A.B., told SAM that “when the preacher concluded the Friday service, we start the prayers, and while we are at the second kneeling, we heard fire shots, we didn’t know who are the attackers or what do they want, we continued and completed our prayers, the attackers fired at the mosque’s doors, and shouted some names for whom they are searching, but they were not in the mosque, and they continued firing at us, and Mr. Muhammed Khalid was shot dead.

I heard the children crying and men shouting, so we kept the children at the back to avoid gunshots.

Amidst the firing, Muhsin Khalid, brother of Muhammed Khalid, stand and talked to them “fear God why do you kill us, don’t you respect the house of God”, they responded with gunfire and shot him dead. They continued firing amidst worshipers screaming and panic, and injured the imam Ahmed Hadi Hassan, he was bleeding and they refused to let others to rescue him. Other civilians also were injured, including Hani Hassan Khalid, Ahmed Muhsin and Ahmed Hassan, and Abdullah Ali Khalid, the one who calls for prayers (Muazzin).

The gunmen took us near the vehicle, and started the execution. One of them hit the Imam Muhammed Muthanna Obeid in his neck and asked him from where you are? He said I’m displaced from Rabat Amara,

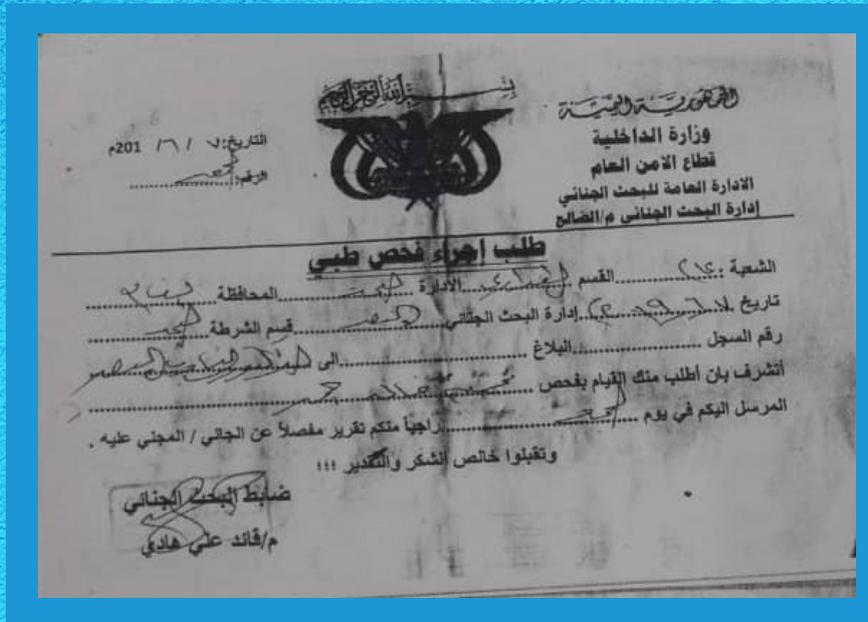
in Mawya, for 4 years, and they asked him; are you “Syed” (Hashemite), he said yes, and the commander Rashid Muhammed Musid ordered a masked gunman to kill him, who shot and killed him.

Then Rashid asked Abdo Saleh Ahmed about his name and he answered, and then asked him where he work? He said I’m a soldier in Al-Jarba, and then Rashid sad you are Houthi, and fired and killed him.

They fired again at the imam’s dead body, and called Ali Muhammed Ahmed, who asked; why do you want to kill me?, during this time, Taha Al-Shaiba tried to escape, but some gunmen followed and killed him, and Rashid asked if they killed him and they confirmed that.

Me and two other abductees remained and Rashed said, ‘Take them and they will be punished later. On the way, one of the Al-Amaliqa vehicle was waiting for us. They drive behind us until they brought us to the Al-Hamra area where Yousuf al-Sabai battalion is located. They put us in a room and the gunmen went to lunch. When they returned, they took us back to the vehicle and took us inside the headquarters of the Security Belt forces in the Hakola area and handed us over to the camp commander. They put us in prison after they covered our eyes. They interrogated us under threat of death and put us in separate rooms where we stayed until we were released.

Official Documents



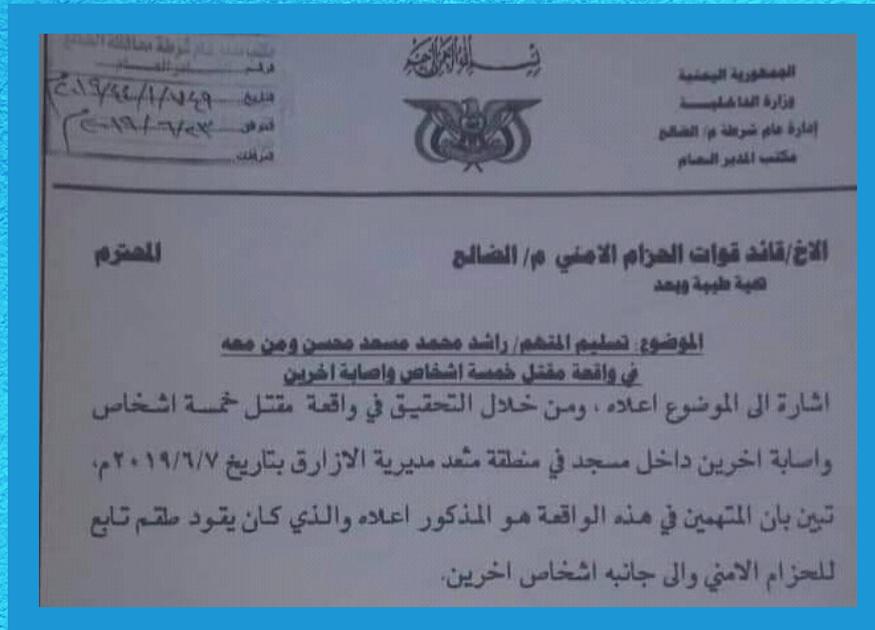
Forensic Report:

SAM obtained five forensic reports issued by Dr. Muhammed Muhsin Al-Haidari, a doctor at Al-Nasr Hospital in Addalie, as directed by the Criminal Investigation Department in the governorate on 7 June 2019. The reports confirm that the victims were exposed to a number of shots, mostly in the upper body. These reports illustrate the willfulness and brutality of the perpetrators towards the victims.



Technical Report

SAM obtained a technical report from the Department of Criminal Evidence and the Crime Scene in the criminal investigation in Addis Ababa governorate. The report confirmed, based on an examination of the remnants of the crime, and listening to the villagers that a patrol belonging to the "Security Belt" in Addis Ababa governorate, with a group of soldiers, carried out the crime and opened fire on worshipers inside the mosque, killing two of them and injuring others. The gunmen took six others out of the mosque and executed three of them, according to a June 2019 technical report.



Police Memos

One of the memos obtained by SAM was addressed to the commander of the Security Belt in Addalig governorate, Brigadier General Adlan Saleh al-Hatas, in which he demanded the extradition of the main defendant, according to the document, he is Rashid Muhammed Musid Muhsin, and requested in the letter dated 23 June 2019 from the Commander of the «Security Belt» forces to hand over the accused and his group to the Criminal Investigation Department, for investigation with regard to the incident that the preliminary investigation showed his involvement, with him and his group on the patrol vehicle of the Security Belt, and complete the legal proceedings in this incident and refer them to the prosecution.



Disappointment

Despite the fact that this crime was committed publicly, and the interaction of public opinion and sympathy with the victims and the movement of elders and wisemen of the region, and the professionalism of the police in the process of gathering evidence in this incident, however, the witnesses and the families of the victims interviewed by «SAM» confirmed that the Security Belt forces did not respond to the request to extradite the accused to this crime, and the failure to extradite the accused Rashid Muhammed and his group until the date of issuance of this report.

commendations

Emirati forces in Yemen

- should hand over those accused of extrajudicial executions in Hijrat Muth'ad area of Addalie governorate, affiliated with the Security Belt forces in the governorate, to the Yemeni authorities and the official judiciary to be punished. Compensation for victims and their relatives who have suffered serious harm as a result of this crime.

The Yemeni government

- should work hard to resolve any security or military formations that do not belong to the ministries of interior and defense, and enforce the relevant law against violators to ensure the security, safety and tranquility of society.
- The Yemeni government should work to provide redress to victims of this crime and all other crimes committed by these forces, in areas under their control.

UN Pane

- of Expert teams, the Office of the UN High Commissioner in Yemen, the National Commission for Investigating Allegations of Human Rights Violations, and all international and local organizations should contribute to the investigation of this heinous crime, push to ensure justice to the victims and bring the suspects to the justice.



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